

Another Serial Story Begins Next Week. See Page 153.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



"YOU ARE THE MOST AGGRAVATING, TORMENTING, MOCKING LITTLE FIEND THAT EVER WORE THE SHAPE OF A WOMAN," SAID ANGUS.

## A CHRISTMAS TRUST.

NOVELETTE.  
PART ONE.

PROLOGUE.

**M**Y lady stood before the long French window, looking out on the whitening terraces and slow-falling snow, with eyes whose light had been dimmed by bitter sorrow and pain. Her face—so royally beautiful, so proudly pure—bore the same impress of suffering, and the line of the perfect lips was very mournful.

She looked like a queen, standing there in the waning December light, clad from head to foot in black velvet, falling in graceful folds

about the stately figure—a queen in her beauty and dignity, a very woman in her loneliness and sorrow.

The slender throat was guiltless of all ornament save a ruffle of fine white lace; and the dark hair, in which faint streaks of grey were already showing, was coiled low upon the neck, waving backwards from the broad, low brow, where little lines of pain were graven.

Not a woman in the flush of youth. My lady is thirty-three, and feels fifty, she says often to herself, for lapped in luxury as she is, and beloved by many, her life has not been a happy one.

A widow, with no living relative, there is small wonder that at times she finds her loneliness oppressive, the duties of her state irksome. Then, too, this season of the year, which to most folks brings joy, only brings to

her the memory of dead hopes, dead dreams, and a dead love; of trust betrayed, of solemn vows broken; of long, long months of anguish, when she—deserted, cast aside like a faded flower—had compelled herself to face a questioning world bravely; to bear with courage the condolences or ill-concealed sneers of those around.

Thinking of these things she stirred a little, and the slender hands met together in a half-convulsive clasp.

"I am all alone," she whispered, "all alone! If I had but a little child to call my own, it would be easy to live. How long will it last, this dreary life of mine. And why, oh, why, cannot I forget, as some women do, and find my happiness in the gifts the gods provide?"

She turned wearily from the window, and sought a low chair by the wood fire; and there

she sat dreaming, dreaming, whilst the twilight deepened into utter darkness, and the snow fell noiselessly over garden and field until not a trace of pathway or road could be seen.

"Dinner waits, my lady," announced a dignified footman, and, rising, she moved slowly into the adjacent room, where she trifled with the dainty viands and thought sadly how few of her acquaintances were spending this evening—Christmas-Eve—alone.

She might have surrounded herself with gay company, but she had no heart to be merry; and there were very few she loved, not many whose society she could long tolerate. Her hermit-like life had totally unfitted her for so-called pleasure, and the babble of voices confused her.

Having finished her solitary meal, she returned to her favourite room, and sat down once more before the fire, mentally taking up the threads she had dropped in her life's romance.

From the servants' hall came the sound of merry voices, loud laughter, and an occasional burst of song.

"Be happy whilst you may, poor souls," said my lady. "Heaven only knows what lies before you of misery and despair."

She started with a low cry, when suddenly the night air was cleft by voices—rude, untutored voices—singing an old Christmas ballad familiar to my lady from her early childhood.

She bowed her face upon her hands a moment and wept, or seemed to weep. Then with a gesture of fierce self-scorn, she rose, and crossing to the window, swept back the curtains, and looked out.

What she saw was a small company of men and boys, who at the first glimpse of my lady doffed their caps, and ceased singing.

She stepped out upon the terrace, heedless of the falling snow.

"A happy Christmas to you!" was all she said, in the lowest and sweetest of voices; "and thank you for the pleasure you have given me" (although, indeed, she had listened to their performance with strong shuddering). "If you will please go round to the servants' door, you will find a hot supper ready. Cook has not been forgetful of you."

Then once more she was alone. Louder and louder grew the mirth below, but she did not go down. Her presence would have spoiled sport, and having made the housekeeper her almoner she was well content to remain by the fire.

It was growing late now; and she, a little weary with mental conflict, thought of retiring to her bedchamber, when she was startled by the sound of fingers upon the window-pane, and a voice that waited,—

"Let me in. Oh, for Heaven's sake, let me in! I am dying of cold and hunger."

My lady was a brave woman, and so, without a moment's hesitation, she rose, and flinging wide the window said,—

"Who are you? I cannot see. The snow all but blinds one;" and, in answer to her, a dark-robed, dragged figure stumbled into the warm, bright room—a woe-begone, piteous figure, indeed, bearing in its poor arms a little child, shielded from the biting wind by a thick tartan shawl. My lady drew back a little, then as the white, wan face of her visitor was lifted to hers, she cried sharply, "Celial! Oh, Heaven, what untoward fate brings you here?"

"Be merciful," pleaded the other through her heavy sobs. "Oh! for my child's sake, be merciful! You may well afford to forgive me, seeing you have all your heart can desire, and that long ago you ceased to love him. You are rich, honoured, free! Look at me! I tell you there is no woman on earth more wretched than I, more ill-treated, despised, disliked. There, if you crave for revenge, you have it. What am I now? Who, of all my friends would now stretch out a helping hand to me, save you—you I wronged so cruelly. And yet, Heaven knows I saved you from lifelong misery

when I seemed to doom you to it. Aline, speak to me."

"What shall I say?" in a low voice; "what can I say? What is it you demand of me?"

"Protection for my child and his. Oh! you loved him too dearly once to have utterly forgotten him. Women like you never forget, even though they marry, to the surprise of all who know them. Aline, look at the child. She is lovely enough to melt a heart of stone, and she is my only one—my little ewe lamb. All the others died at birth, or shortly after. She alone lives—to be my curse if, indeed, her father has his wicked way."

"What do you mean?" asked my lady, without glancing at the child, who still slept.

"She is to be taken from me, brought up amongst low and vile people, tutored to all manner of vice, that when she is grown to womanhood she may play decoy to her father's dupes, as, Heaven help me, I have been forced to do. And, so to save her from worse than death, I came to you for help. He will never guess where she is; he may kill me before I will give him my secret. It is no new thing for him to strike me, and—and I can bear it; but I cannot bear to think of my darling sunk so low as I in sin. Take her, Aline, and Heaven will reward you for your goodness. Be merciful to one who never showed you mercy."

My lady's lips quivered a moment, and the dark eyes, which might well have flashed scorn upon the pleader, were full of pity; but she merely said,—

"Begin at the beginning, and tell me all. Stay, you look worn and ill; let me get you wine."

The visitor caught her by the skirts,—

"Do not go, do not leave me, I must not be seen by any save yourself. Griffith must never trace me here, or he would wrest the child from you, if you were twice as rich, twice as powerful as you are. He would do it if only to break my heart, for he hates me now as much as once he loved me. Aline, I stole your lover from you! For that you should thank Heaven, for on this earth there is no man more vile, more debased, than Griffith Wey."

"Drink this," my lady said, in a low voice, through which there ran a thrill of pain, "and remember you are quite safe here. No one shall know of your coming or going. Wait, you must have food."

She was absent a few moments, returning with such light refreshments as she could secure unseen by any of the servants; and not until Celial had satisfied her hunger would she suffer her again to speak. But the repast being ended, she said,—

"Now, tell your story," and, obeying that stronger will, the wretched woman began her wretched tale.

"For six months after we were married Griffith adored me, and I was too happy to feel much remorse for my sin against you—to care that I had given up home, friends, all for his sake. But then there slowly came a change. He began to grow indifferent, then harsh; and, finally, his money being gone, he did not hesitate to show himself a rascal, gambler, libertine, and I was made his decoy. I tried to be true to my better self. I fought hard against his will, but he was strong and merciless, I a weak thing at best. Children were born to us, who died one after another, leaving my sad heart desolate. And there were times when I thought I must go mad; and only this, my last babe, stood between me and self destruction. But sorrow and much weeping have made me old before my time; and now that I am useless to him my liege lord would fain be rid of me. Look at me," and with a swift gesture she pushed back her shabby bonnet. "If you had met me in the street, say, would you have known me? And I was lovely once; I may say so now, when my beauty has all gone, Aline, I have lived to curse my father."

The stately woman looking down upon her felt her heart melt with pity within her. What if her companion had wronged and

betrayed her? Who was she to visit her resentment upon her? The dark eyes were full of unshed tears as they rested upon the faded glory of the golden tresses, the wan cheeks and hollow, feverish blue eyes.

"Yes," she said, "Poor soul, you have suffered?"

"Suffered!" cried Celial, with a tragic gesture. "Ay, more than I can tell, and before me my path lies stretched, so dark, so rough and thorny, that my heart quails at thought of it. And yesterday, when I sat alone (Griffith being now at York), I seemed to see my child, my innocent little Jennifer, growing evil like me, and old before her time. Then Heaven gave me courage to plan her salvation. I had no money, but I sold my wedding-ring, and with the proceeds travelled to Gorleston—the remaining distance (ten miles) I have walked. I can do anything for her sake, ay, even to dying for her if need be. Aline, there was no one to whom I could appeal but you. Will you fail me now?"

"I will not," simply and gravely. "Give me the child."

With trembling hands the wretched mother loosed the wraps about the infantile form, and held it close a moment, as though already the anguish of parting were upon her. Then, without a word, she laid the little one in my lady's arms. She stirred in her sleep. A moment after her bright, grey eyes open wide upon my lady's face; then stretching up one tiny hand she let it rest upon her neck, and so slept once more.

"She shall be to me as my own."

"Aline! Aline! Heaven bless you, and—Heaven keep my darling! Oh! how shall I bear to say good-bye; how live without her love? My pretty one, my darling one, how I shall miss your innocent prattle, the sound of your little feet about my desolate home; but—for your good—for your good—I—I will be brave."

She rose then as if to go.

"I dare not stay," she said, in answer to my lady's entreaty. "I cannot risk discovery. Be kind to her, Aline. She will have no mother but you, and Heaven deal by you as you fulfil your trust. Good-bye, good-bye, Jennifer, my Jennifer!" and then she broke into frantic weeping, kissing the child with such an abandonment of woe that she woke and cried in her baby voice:

"Mamma, mamma, 'oo must not cry; Jen'fer be sorry too"; and with that little cheek pressed to hers, the unhappy mother fought with and mastered all outward signs of misery. She laid the child upon a couch, whispering fond, foolish words such as mothers love to use; and now, the moment for parting having come, she said as blithely as her aching heart allowed:

"Mamma is going away for a short while, my darling, but this dear lady has promised to take care of you until I come again. You must be very, very good, my lamb, and not vex her with crying—for that would make mamma sad. And now, good-bye, good-bye, my treasure. May the holy angels have you in their keeping."

She lifted herself erect then.

"I am going," she said to my lady. "The worst is over. Death is easy compared with this. Aline, when she is old enough to understand, speak to her of her mother. Do not suffer me to be quite forgotten; but let her think me dead, let my sins and my sorrows be hidden from her. And, if I dared, I would ask, just now and again, for some tidings of her."

"I will write you."

"No, no! He would intercept your letters, and my sacrifice would be in vain. But if, once a year, you would give me news through the medium of some paper!"

"Not once, Celial, but each quarter day you may look in the 'Times,' and so satisfy yourself of Jennifer's well-being. I shall address you by the old school name. It will be safer so. Mr. Wey will not recognise you under the 'nom de plume' 'Birdie.' Will you go alone?"



must you? Oh, Celia, your great need has broken down all my resentment, and the old love yet lives in my heart for you. Come back to me, poor heart; make your home with me. I am a desolate woman."

"No, no! It cannot be; but Heaven bless you for your charity, your forgiveness. Good-bye, good-bye. If I stay longer my resolution will fail me. No, I dare not look at my little one again. This is her birthday. She is four years' old; and then, as she stepped from the window my lady thrust her well-filled purse into the cold, reluctant hand, and listening for a while to the bitter sobs, growing ever fainter in the distance went back to the child. When, later, a servant carried in a lamp, he started to see a child asleep in Lady Egremont's arms.

"This is my ward!" she said calmly, and offered no explanation concerning the manner in which Jennifer came to her.

#### CHAPTER I.

"Jennifer!"

"Yes mamma, I am coming," answered a fresh young voice, and there stepped into my lady's view a slight form clad in some soft ruby material, admirably calculated to enhance the fairness of the wearer's skin, the brightness of this gold-brown hair.

"I was so busy with my evergreens that I never remembered the post had come in. What letters have you, mamma? Oh! one from Angus. And pray what has he to say?"

"There is a message for you, dear! Here it is," reading from an open letter. "Please tell my old playmate, Jennifer, that I shall be in Coltsworth on the twenty-third. I wonder if she will recognise me after three years' absence. I am brown as a bushman, and sport a moustache. And she—well, from a wee bit of a thing of fifteen, she has sprung into a full grown young lady; but I hope in one thing she is unaltered. I mean her friendship for her loyal if unworthy knight."

"I expect," said Jennifer, her pretty head cunningly aside. "I quite expect he will be horribly German in ways and words. And, oh! if you only guessed how much I hate sentimentalism in a man you would be a wee bit startled."

"You are always startling me," my lady answered, with an indulgent smile. "You are such a very erratic young person. But Angus will be here to-morrow, and I am wondering how you will meet him. You used to be such friends, and it was pretty to see the air of proprietorship with which he regarded you; when you were quite small you used to call him, 'Husband Angus,' although he was a big boy, and five years your senior."

"Then I conclude I was an excessively forward young woman," laughing and blushing too; "but my youth must be my excuse. And now mamma, dear, suppose we dismiss Angus from our minds, and talk of everyday topics? Thursday is my birthday. I shall be actually eighteen; and just to celebrate such an important event I want you to grant me a very, very great favour. Promise, before it is even put into words."

"I promise, although I fancy I am doing a rash thing," and one white jewelled hand stole lovingly over the sun-bright tresses. "You have ruled me with a rod of iron ever since you came to Coltsworth! What is this favour of which you make so much?"

"I want you just for one night, my birthday night, to lay aside these black robes and wear that lovely crimson velvet gown I have so often admired. It isn't moth-eaten, it isn't old-fashioned, because the mode of to-day is the counterpart of that twenty years ago; the long straight folds are so admirably suited to you, dear mamma."

"I have worn black ever since my husband died," my lady answered, in a low voice. "But I have given my promise, and I will keep it; although I am getting an old woman now, and have lost my love of finery."

The girl seated at her feet fondled her hands with a loving, reverent gesture.

"Dear mamma!" was all she said; but the tone spoke volumes, and the piquante face was shadowed a moment with the thought of the other's sorrow."

Then, after a pause,—

"You must have loved Lord Egremont most dearly so to sorrow for him. Oh! mamma! if I could only give you some of the brightness of my life!"

My lady sighed.

"Heaven forbid that I should rob you of your joy," she said, very gently. "And now, Jennifer, you are old enough to know something of my story. Sit here, child, and let me tell you how it came about I married Lord Egremont. He had loved me long and truly, but I—so blind I was—I would not see his goodness and his loyalty, but gave my whole heart to one who valued it only until a fairer face than mine made my gift worthless. I was jilted most ignominiously, and I thought that never any more would I love or trust again. Knowing all my trouble, guessing at my grief, Lord Egremont renewed his suit, and was again refused. I had no love to give any man. Then my father died. We had never been rich; but at his death I found myself a pauper, and was compelled to go into the world to earn my own bread. Six months I endured this slavery, and then there came a messenger to me from Lord Egremont. He had been thrown from his horse in the hunting field. His wounds were mortal; he prayed that I would go to him before the end. What could I do but obey? And when I saw him so helpless and so stricken my heart melted towards him, and I felt there was nothing too hard for me to do for him; and when he prayed that he might call me wife before he died I could not refuse his petition, although Heaven knows I never thought of the difference my marriage would make to me."

"There, by his bedside, I vowed to love him in sickness or health, and there seemed to me an awful mockery in those solemn words, because I believed that before another day dawned he would be gone, and I a widow."

"But it was not so. Despite his deadly hurt he lived eighteen long months, suffering daily martyrdom, yet never complaining, and I am glad now to think my presence lightened his load, that I could minister to his needs without fear and without reproach."

"I loved him with a sister's love. I honoured him above all men; and when he quietly faded away my life grew dark indeed. I had not thought I could so miss him. I never knew until too late how his tenderness encompassed me, how much I leaned upon his wisdom and his strength."

"And when his will was read I broke down utterly; because, even after death, his love followed me, his care enveloped me."

"To the day of my death he left me sole possessor of all his worldly belongings, adding, 'and if in course of time my dear wife shall marry again, she shall not suffer any loss of station or of wealth; and should she leave children to mourn her, one half of my personal property shall descend to them; the other half I bequeath to my cousin, Raymond Este, to whom the title goes.'"

My lady ceased, and the young girl, stroking her hand softly, said,—

"How good to be so beloved! Mamma, I often think, when I look at you, you are the sort of woman for whom men draw sword, and for whom they will gladly give up wealth, country, ay, honour itself; and sometimes I envy your beauty!"

"You should not, child! It never brought me happiness; and to my nearest and dearest friend it proved a curse instead of a blessing."

"You are speaking of my own mother?" Jennifer said, under her breath. "Was not my father kind to her?"

"I fear not!"

"Poor mother! to die so young; and, perhaps, it was best, seeing she was unhappy. And my father—did he long survive her?"

"I do not know. He—he died abroad," flushing at her own untruth; "so that now you are my very own child—the last love of my life."

Jennifer sat silent awhile. Then she said, in a musing tone:

"Am I like my father? I hope not! Oh, I hope not! because, with his features, I might inherit his black heart."

My lady took the small, sweet face between her palms.

"You are as unlike your father as I am. You have grey eyes, his were brown. He was a handsome man, you are only a bonny, honest English girl—not very beautiful, not very clever; but dearer to me than all the world beside. And now, child, go back to your work; this talk has saddened you. Forget it if you can!"

And she kissed the sweet, red mouth lifted to hers with all a mother's fondness. Truly my lady had not failed in her trust.

Jennifer went slowly and thoughtfully back to her wreaths and crosses.

"Oh, how I love her!" she said to herself.

"Could my mother be so good to me as she? And yet—and yet, I wish I could remember my very own mother. I seem so unlike other girls, without a friend or relation of my own. Even my name is borrowed. I wonder if mamma will ever tell me the whole truth, because there must be some grave reason for hiding it; and if I am not Jennifer Egremont, who am I?"

But she was young, had never known trouble, and so quickly forgot her vague fears and suspicions, throwing herself heart and soul into her work; and she had not the faintest recollection of her life before coming to this Hall.

On the twenty-third Angus Roy came, bringing with him a breath of fresh, strong life, and a suggestion of the outer world, of which Jennifer was as innocent as a child.

She was shy with him at first. It seemed incredible that this tall, bronzed son of Anak should be her old playfellow, and in her amazement at the change she saw in him, she quite forgot that the passing years had also left their mark upon her.

From a slip of a girl, with short frocks and unconfined tresses, she had developed into a well-grown young lady, just a trifle above the medium height, with a piquante, dainty face, lit up by lustrous eyes, whose chief charm was their childlike candour and innocence.

She was not pretty, but she was certainly attractive; and the spirited mouth gave character to the whole face, which gleamed so fresh and fair beneath the crown of gold-brown tresses.

"Sir Lewis is very good to spare you so soon," my lady said, her deep eyes resting kindly upon the dark, frank face of her old favourite. "I am almost ashamed to rob him of you at such an early period."

"Oh!" said Angus, "you must not distress yourself on that score. The poor pater is enduring agonies at present with the churchwardens about the Christmas gifts. He never can be brought to understand why one poor wretch should have more than another, or why the dissenters should be left in the cold because they follow their own consciences."

And the matter always ends in his providing an additional fund for their benefit. Believe me, he infinitely prefers my room to my company at such a time. It is a maxim of his not to let his right hand know what his left does. Whew! I do believe I have made a speech."

He said this with such an air of comical dismay that Jennifer laughed outright, and so the ice between them was broken.

Before Angus left they had made great strides towards their former friendly understanding; and my lady watched with interested eyes, because if she must give her darling up to any man she would much prefer that man should be Angus.

The next day he came again, and it being Jennifer's birthday he brought with him a little gift he had purchased for her in Venice. It was a miniature mirror framed in delicate flowers, marvellously wrought in glass, and Jennifer's delight knew no bounds.

"I shall keep it always," she said. "It is so lovely. How careful you must have been in conveying it here, for not a spray is broken. Mamma, look how perfect it is!" and she brought it with flushed cheeks to my lady.

"You are very fortunate," she said, gently; but the girl noticed a certain sadness in her manner, and hung about her with fond observances, little guessing that her thoughts had flown back to that Christmas Eve fourteen years ago, when poor Celia Wey had given her child into her charge, and gone away weeping, to bear her bitter burden as best she might.

"Mamma, you are ill?" Jennifer said, with loving solicitude.

"No, my darling, no. It is but your fancy. I am well and—happy in your happiness. Now, Angus, I forbid you to carry her off. She must be quite fresh to-night, for this is her first party, and I want her to remember it with unalloyed pleasure."

"Lady Egremont, I had no idea of capturing Miss Jennifer and compelling her to walk or drive as the mood seized me," answered Angus, with mock surprise. "I have not forgotten we dance to-night—and I mean to scribble my initials all over her tablets. I always did as I pleased in the old days, you know."

"But times have altered," retorted Jennifer, "and I absolutely refuse to submit to your arbitrary rule. Mamma, will you please entertain this autocrat. I have heaps of work to do yet," and with that she tripped away, leaving the young man somewhat discomfited.

He looked eagerly forward to the evening, and, arriving with most unfashionable punctuality, waited for Jennifer to make her appearance.

He trifled awhile with a book of prints, listlessly turned the leaves of a new novel, yawned a good deal, then rising, stood, in the time-honoured style of the true Britisher, before the fire.

But in a moment he changed his position, and his good-looking face grew almost handsome in its eagerness as he heard the "frou frou" of a woman's skirts outside.

It was only my lady—only! What a term to apply to this superb woman, who entering, stood in the full blaze of light which filled the room.

She was only forty-seven, but her luxuriant hair was white as snow, although her face remained untouched by time, and the fire of her dark eyes was not quenched. To please Jennifer she wore the crimson velvet robe so long discarded. It was cut just low enough to show the curves of the perfect throat, and the sleeves falling away from the elbows left the white arms bare, save for the jewels encircling them. Diamonds flashed in her hair, her ears, sparkled about the white neck; a diamond brooch secured the white flowers at her breast.

Her wondrous beauty almost made Angus speechless. Perhaps she saw this, and was pleased by this unconscious tribute to her charms, for she smiled as she came forward, saying,—

"Your looks tell me this new departure of mine is not altogether a failure; but wait, if you please, until you have seen Jennifer!"

"Who takes my name in vain?" cried a gay voice, and there in the open doorway stood a girl so radiantly happy, so prettily piquante, that Angus hardly recognised her.

She was clad wholly in white—soft, shimmering satin and laces—and she looked almost like a bride in her fleckless robes. The young man thought her lovely as his eyes rested upon her, and his pulses beat fast as she laid her slender hand in his in a friendly welcome.

"Jennifer, what have you done to yourself? Oh, you little witch, your conquest of my governor will be complete to-night. He will

swear by you, and I!—well, I shall sink into insignificance beside you."

"You are talking nonsense, Angus. I knew you would after such a long residence in Germany. I quite wonder you do not wear a beard and glasses, or allow your hair to fall in wild confusion about your shoulders!"

"You credited me with a lot of sense," he laughed lightly, "but I really believe you never thought of me at all."

"Yes, I did—thought of you with pity, because I foresaw the complete spoiling of a sturdy, English character and—oh! Sir Lewis, how glad I am to welcome you! Angus and I had just got to quarrelling."

"Then I can only say he is an unmannerly young rogue, for of course the fault is his, Lady Egremont, you excel yourself."

"Sir Lewis, you have not forgotten how to flatter!"

Then more guests entered, and the dinner proved a merry meal, for my lady was careful not to obtrude sorrows of her own upon her guests, and smiled as though Christmas Eve brought her no sad memories, no keen regrets.

Dancing followed, a large room having been emptied of furniture for that purpose. My lady had never cared to reopen the long-closed ball-room, where Lord Egremont danced the night before his fatal accident. And Jennifer's foot was the lightest there, her smile the brightest, for she was drinking deep draughts of happiness, and did not give one thought to the past or future, finding the present so fair.

All unperceived, forgotten, my lady stood by an open window, until the ripple of light laughter, the clash of instruments, the musical rhythm of moving feet all but maddened her. Then she stepped out upon the sodden terrace—for this was a green and wet Christmas—and lifting her face to the sullen sky, prayed "Heaven keep her happy."

A hand clutched her skirts, a feeble, feverish hand, and a broken voice prayed,

"Bring me where I may see her, remaining myself unseen. I am going mad for a sight of my darling!"

## CHAPTER II.

My lady started with a low cry, and a great trembling came upon her.

"Is it well?" she asked, for the fear that Celia might take away her darling filled her whole soul. "She is well and happy; and you, oh! you poor mother, can you keep silence with your child so near?"

"I have kept silent fourteen years. I shall not fail now. Aline, you will not refuse a mother's prayer, or snatch a moment's joy from such a wretched life as mine!"

For answer, Lady Egremont took her by the hand.

"You must come with me first, and remove some of the stains of travel;" and by gentle force she led her into an adjoining room, where she ministered to her needs just as she had done fourteen years ago. And when the generous wine had brought some faint fleck of colour into Celia's deathly cheeks she began with gentle hand to smooth the damp, dishevelled tresses, to repair as best she could the damage wrought by rain and earth upon the other's garments.

"Where is he?" she asked at length.

"At Needham, and, being so near, I could not resist the craving to see my child. Oh, if you only knew what I have endured since last we met, your heart would bleed for me. Sometimes, when I have been reviled and beaten until I could scarcely think or move, I have felt I must have my Jennifer to save me from madness or crime; but always, always I have tried to set her welfare before my own desire, and in my better moods I am content that we should be parted."

"You poor soul!" And then, while the red blood flamed into her beautiful face she added, "You do not look prosperous, Celia. You must let me help you"; and, heeding no remonstrance, she unlocked a desk, taking out

a little roll of notes, which she tendered her visitor.

"Do not refuse them. Jennifer's mother shall not want whilst I can help her."

"Aline, you are an angel. And now bring me where I may see her, for if I delay longer he will reach home first, and will discover all I most need to hide."

Lady Egremont drew her to the window; but before either could step out on the terrace Jennifer's voice was heard.

"I hate a wet Christmas! It is so unlike the season poets and authors prate about. It never should be unaccompanied by snow and frost. This is horrible!"

Then a manly voice made answer, tersely—

"It's beastly!" and the girl laughingly reproved him for the inelegant speech.

"That is Jennifer," said my lady, as the young couple stepped into the open. The girl was holding her dainty skirts closely about her, and both head and shoulders were enveloped in a scarlet cloak. The piquante face and arch eyes were lifted mischievously to her companion's, and the pretty mouth wore so glad a smile that the unhappy mother watching her could have no doubt that she found life sweet. She fell against the wall, her face whiter, if possible than before, and from beneath the long light lashes two heavy tears forced their way.

"Courage," whispered her friend; "courage, Celia. Only be brave a little longer and I will bring her to you. You shall no longer be starved of your desire."

Mrs. Wey dashed aside her tears with an impatient hand.

"I shall shed no more," she said, apologetically, "and she shall not guess the truth."

So my lady, opening the window, called Jennifer to her, and, with a little nod of dismissal to Angus, she came quickly towards her.

"Mamma, what are you doing here all alone, and in semi-darkness; and why will you not dance? I heard young Mr. Doone say just now there was neither maid nor wife in the room who could compare with lovely Lady Egremont. What do you think of the compliment?"

"That it was fulsome in the extreme, and very rude to my guests," smiling.

"Oh, dear! I was quite prepared to like Mr. Doone for the nice taste he displayed!" with whimsical disappointment. "And now, mamma, for what am I wanted?"

"I am anxious you should meet a very old friend of mine, who has arrived suddenly and unexpectedly; she knew your mother years ago, and has never forgotten you, whom she saw last fourteen years since."

The bright face grew grave.

"I shall be glad to meet her," Jennifer said, simply. "I know so little of my parents. She may tell me more of them than you can."

"Come then"; and my lady drew her into the room. So they, mother and child, stood at last face to face, and so bitter was the contrast between them that the unwonted tears sprang to Lady Egremont's eyes. The one was so fresh, so pretty, so full of hope, and young, vigorous life, so daintily clad and tenderly cared for; the other so old and haggard before her time, so poorly clothed and fed, so fallen from her old state and loveliness, so evidently a disappointed, miserable woman, that it needed no words to tell her story. The gold of her still luxuriant hair was thickly streaked with grey, the light of her lovely blue eyes dimmed; and all her features were sharpened by such want, such woe, that even Jennifer, in her happy ignorance, could not but divine something of the truth.

"You were my mother's friend," she said, ever so gently. "You will, perhaps, tell me of her! Ah! do not stand. You look so weak and ill, and sweeping aside her skirts she made room for Celia on the couch beside her.

The poor mother, every pulse in her body throbbing, all her heart yearning over her darling, yet constrained herself to say calmly,—



"I knew your mother well, dear, from childhood."

"And I am like her? I should be pleased to think that," wistfully "although my mamma (with a loving glance at my lady) says I am not."

Celia took the fresh, sweet face between her palms,—

"Your mother was very fair, and some said beautiful. You are not like her, but you look good, and goodness is better than beauty."

"Won't you tell me your name?" asked Jennifer, with the innocent air of a child. "Mamma forgot to introduce us."

"I am called Celia, as your mother was. Remember me by that name, because it was hers too. Will you kiss me, Jennifer?"

Alas! poor soul, this ordeal was almost more than she could bear. She must shorten the interview, or break utterly down, and betray herself to her child.

"Must you go, when you look so tired and ill? Mamma, do not permit her," cried Jennifer, as she held up her face to be kissed.

"My dear, there are grave reasons why my friend should go now."

"But you will come again? There is so much I want to say to you, so many questions I have to ask. You have told me scarcely anything of my mother, and have not spoken of my father."

"Forget him!" cried Celia, carried out of herself by her wrongs. "He made your mother's life miserable! He was utterly false, utterly craven—"

"Hush!" said my lady, speaking for the first time. "Do not blacken him to her; he was her father." And then she took Jennifer's hands and held them fast. "Do not think any more of the past. It cannot shadow your young life, and no regrets can alter it. Say good-bye now to your—to my friend, and go back to your pleasure."

Very, very gently the girl drew her hands from that loving hold, and, turning to her unknown mother, laid her arms about her neck.

"You are sick and sad," she said, in a low voice. "I do not know how to comfort you! On such a night as this all should be happy. Oh! I wonder if ever I too shall learn, like you and mamma, to look sadly over my past life at this glad season! I—I—oh, I have been so careless of sorrow," and then Celia felt the soft cheek pressed to hers, the warm young lips laid upon her pallid mouth, and for a blessed moment held her child in her arms, and prayed above her. Then releasing her she stood erect.

"Heaven bless and keep you good," she said, and with one long, loving glance went out, followed by my lady.

On the terrace they said adieu, the latter returning as quickly as possible to Jennifer, who was standing pale and thoughtful beside the mantel.

"Mamma," she said, in a low voice, "was my father a very bad man?"

"It is not for us to judge him, dear. He and your mother did not agree very well. You need ask no more about the matter."

But Jennifer dropped on her knees beside her, and fondling her hands said,—

"But tell me only this. The fault was not my mother's?"

"I am sure it was not! She loved him very dearly—to dearly ever to cross his will in matters that were right and good."

Poor mother, I—I—oh! am I very wicked? I am almost glad to know he is dead!" and she hid her face in my lady's lap.

"Hush! hush! Jennifer. You are unstrung, unnerved, and to-night of all nights you should be glad. Go back to your friends, and I will join you shortly. Let me find rosier cheeks when I come."

The girl rose, shook out her skirts, and with a backward look of love for Lady Egremont returned to the guests; but Angus noticed she was pale and somewhat distraught, and questioned her closely as to the reason of the

change in her. She only shook her head and said,—

"I have been brought face to face with sorrow to-night, and—and it has taught me many things in a short while. This is our dance. Do not notice me. I shall be my old self soon."

And as her light form was whirled past the windows, a woman, watching through the rain and mist, sobbed heartbrokenly,—

"Heaven bless and keep you, my darling! my darling!—save you from the perils and pains I have known! You spoke kindly to me, dear, not knowing who I was. You kissed me, pitied me, grieved with me. My child, oh, my child!"

Then she hurried through the park, and gaining the high road at last found herself confronted by a tall, slight man, who, laying his hand heavily upon her shoulder, said,—

"What are you doing here?"

With a shrill cry she started back from him.

"You—you have followed me," she said, in a terrified tone. "Am I never any more to be mistress of myself and my actions?"

"You are answerable to me for all you do," menacingly. "And do you suppose I forget of what to-night is the anniversary? or that I shall ever forgive your offence? What took you to the Hall to-night? And was your welcome so chilly that your visit ended so quickly?"

"I went—because—because we were in want of common necessities; and I knew that, vilely as we wronged Lady Egremont, she would not refuse me assistance. See how generous she has been!" and talking rapidly to cover her previous emotion, and to distract his attention, she held the little roll of notes towards him.

He took them with tigerish eagerness, saying,—

"I don't quite believe your story, Celia! Such generosity is suspicious, although very welcome just now. Come on! Why are you staring at me in that fashion? By Jove! she's going to faint," as the woman reeled and fell against him.

He shook her angrily.

"No nonsense," he said. "If you faint I shall leave you here to get home as you can. The roads are too heavy for me to travel weighted with such a burden as you."

"Give me your arm. I—I shall recover soon," was all she answered. She was far too used to brutality to cry out against it, and so long as her child was safe she could bear all.

Grudgingly he gave her the support she craved, walking so fast that she could scarcely keep pace with him, and was breathless with the haste they made. Arrived within sight of the town, he plunged his hand into his pocket, and producing a few small coins gave them to her, bidding her prepare a savoury meal for him.

She took them timidly, then ventured to ask,—

"Where are you going, Griffith?"

"To turn these notes into gold, my girl, and after to-morrow you can get yourself some decent clothes. I shall make a fresh start with my lady's money, and see that you don't spoil sport, or by Heaven you shall suffer."

She looked steadily into his face then.

"Spare your threats," she answered, with weary contempt. "I know full well of what cruelty you are capable, and have ceased to be afraid."

"You are suddenly brave, my dear wife; but take care. I shall yet wound you to the quick. I'll have you on your knees to me before many days have passed," and with that he turned upon his heel, and strode in an opposite direction to the one she took.

She paused once or twice on her way, to make her small purchases; and gaining at last the miserable rooms she called home set to work to prepare a dainty dish for her lord and master. Now and again she paused, and with hands fast clasped said over and over—

"My darling! my darling! Thank Heaven I found you happy! Thank Heaven I found you kind!"

Towards midnight Griffith Wey returned with some freshly-made acquaintances, whom his wife regarded with disfavour and dislike, although she was compelled to play the part of hostess, and afterwards to replenish their glasses again and yet again as they sat at cards.

Alas! she was too accustomed to such scenes to shudder at the fierce oaths and seemingly jests bandied to and fro; and being no longer needed she walked to a window and looked out, her aching head resting upon the cool glass.

Suddenly voices below began to sing an old quaint Christmas ballad, beginning "The first good joy that Mary had."

She caught her breath sharply, and with her hands pressed close upon her heart—her poor aching heart—she listened to the words, which had been familiar to her from her childhood. She forgot her wretched surroundings, was deaf to the ribald talk and drunken laughter. She saw only her child's face, heard through those singing voices the echo of her child's sweet tones, and felt once more the touch of the innocent young mouth, and thanked Heaven for these things.

Whilst she stood there the guests were one by one departing from the Hall, and before an open window stood Angus and Jennifer.

"The night has cleared," said the former, "and the wind blows the sound of the Christmas bells towards us. A happy Christmas to you, dear Jennifer, and Heaven send you all good things."

"Thank you," she answered, gravely and simply. "And Heaven send comfort to all heavy hearts."

### CHAPTER III.

"Mamma, you wear too grave a face for Christmas morning. Is your poor friend's story still troubling you? Dear (though I am afraid it sounds selfish), let us forget all about it until to-morrow. And here are Sir Lewis and—Angus," as the two gentlemen came in sight. It is needless to say the latter instantly pounced upon Jennifer, and led her off with an air of triumph.

"You are very rude," said the girl, lifting bright eyes to his. "You scarcely allowed me time to exchange greetings with Sir Lewis."

"Lady Egremont will atone for your shortcomings," impudently. "I haven't the least doubt the governor will find her infinitely more amusing than your little self."

"Isn't she splendid this morning?" asked Jennifer, not resenting his speech in the least. "Do you know, Angus, I never can understand why she should remain so long alone! You have heard her story, of course. Do you think she still cares for the man who treated her so basely?"

"Oh, she can't. He was an irreclaimable blackguard," the young man answered; and then he flushed crimson, remembering that Griffith Wey was this girl's father—for to Sir Lewis and his son my lady had confided all the story."

"You know," said Jennifer, "she did not love Lord Egremont, and sometimes I think her heart is still with the man who betrayed her so basely. I hope not, I hope not—my poor beautiful mamma, and her manner was a little agitated. Angus touched her hand gently."

"She is happy in having you"; and before she could even conceive a suitable reply they were at the church door. There a man brushed by them, and in answer to the young fellow's angry look, made profuse apology. He was middle-aged, but still handsome and erect, although his face was not one likely to inspire confidence. He looked like a gentleman, and yet a scoundrel, so that Jennifer instinctively shrank back from him. She was glad when my lady, coming quickly towards them, laid her hand upon her own; but she cried out at the pallor of the beloved face, the strange, scared look in the dear eyes.

"Let us go home, mamma. You are not well," she said.

"It is nothing; only one of my sudden attacks. It will pass soon." And so they went in together, my lady drawing the curtains of her pew close, much to young Roy's disgust.

All through that bright and happy service Lady Egremont sat with her hands tightly clasped, her face as white as the carved angels above her head.

"It has come at last," she thought; "and now may Heaven give me strength to do battle for her—my dear one, my dear one. I could not bear to lose her now; I love her too well. It would break my heart if he should wrest her from me."

And there stood Jennifer beside her; slim and straight, her bright face upturned, her glad, young voice ringing out in the triumphant hymns and joyous chants; her eyes soft with pleasurable anticipation, and all her heart unshadowed by a fear of the future.

Throughout the sermon she held my lady's hand, and the soft colour flickered over the mobile, piquante face; the deep grey eyes grew very tender as she listened to the old, old story, so often told. She was so happy! so happy! How could she dream that sorrow would ever touch her, or life grow too heavy a burden to bear?

When they left the church the Roys again joined them, for the remainder of the day was to be spent by my lady and Jennifer quite en famille; and my lady clung to her companion's arm, as the stranger, who had brushed so rudely against her ward, passed them, and in passing lifted his hat.

"Her father!" said Sir Lewis, under his breath. "Jupiter! what's to be done?"

"It may be only chance that brings him here," my lady ventured (she had not returned Wey's bow); "but I am afraid. Celia was with me last night, and he may have tracked her to the Hall."

"Do not agitate yourself; perhaps your fears are groundless. If not—well, if not, we must find means to protect our little Jennifer."

"You forget," said my lady, wearily. "The child is only eighteen, and for three years her father would have absolute control over her. Sir Lewis, this is a dark day for me. I—I think I am not so strong as I used to be."

"Now, don't break down," cheerily. "I'll stand by you and the lass through everything. And, after all, as you said, it may be only chance that brings Wey to these parts. And if the worst comes, why, we must get the young people married (for it's clear to me my boy is in love with little Jennifer), and then she will be free of her father's control. Yes, rely upon it, that is the best thing we can do," and he laughed such a jolly laugh that Jennifer turned to look at him and smile over her shoulder, shaking her head at his iniquities.

"If I had told her her story, the blow which I feel must fall would be less cruel to her. My poor child! my poor child! In my love for her I have acted very foolishly."

"Not at all! It would have been a shameful thing to sadden so young a life. She never would have felt safe in your keeping, knowing that at any time Griffith Wey might discover her hiding-place, and wrest her from you. I would not tell her now, unless compelled; and should she return my lad's affection she will be in no danger, for we'll get the ceremony over with all haste. Now, just for to-day, banish all care. Jennifer is quick to notice any change in you."

"I will try to show none," my lady answered, faintly smiling; and so went in with Sir Lewis.

There were some who said he would gladly make her mistress of his handsome house, but that she had done with love and lovers years and years ago, when her heart all but broke because of one man's treachery.

Jennifer was in the brightest of spirits, and Sir Lewis caught the infection of her mood,

and his merriment served to cover my lady's quietude. She was thankful for this, because her heart was like lead in her breast, and her head ached with its weight of thought.

Angus told them stories of his life at Heidelberg, the wild frolics of the students; and Jennifer professed to believe him the ring-leader, and the real culprit of every misdeed, until he threatened her with annihilation, and she ran for protection to her old friend, Sir Lewis.

"Make the most of your safety," said Angus, menacingly. "I shall catch you unawares yet, and then for revenge!"

"How charmingly dramatic you are!" retorted the girl, saucily. "Is that another result of your residence in the land of sentiment and lager beer? I don't ask out of idle curiosity, but from a wish for instruction."

"Reverence was certainly a forgotten thing when you were born! Not all your ladyship's teaching could give this mistaken girl an idea of it."

"I give reverence where reverence is due, and I have yet to learn that you merit it. Sir Lewis, why don't you teach your son to govern his tongue and curb his ambition?"

"He is beyond me, quite," laughed Sir Lewis. "It is the young who govern the old now. It was vice versa when I was a youth."

"Yes," from Angus. "Our fathers and mothers were models of obedience and all the other virtues—if we believe their personal accounts. Oh! oh! dad," with a roar of laughter, "don't look so savage! I would not cast the slightest doubt upon your veracity."

"Oh, you children! you children! Here, Angus, take Jennifer away, and show her those new views of mine. I want to talk to her mamma."

"Shamefully dismissed," said Angus, sotto voce. "Come, Miss Egremont, if you are not afraid of my vengeance."

Jennifer, with her head reared high, walked instantly to his side.

"I'm like Nelson, I know no fear. Lead, and I follow," and, laughing, the young folks went to the library, where, it must be owned, the lady claimed more of the young man's attention than did the exquisite views of Scotch scenery.

"Put those things aside," he said at last, a touch of impatience in his voice. "I want you to talk to me. Jennifer, I don't believe you are a bit glad to welcome me home. You are a heartless little wretch."

The girl clambered upon a pair of steps that were standing by, and looked down at him with the demurest of faces.

"I haven't gone through a whole course of sentiment, you know," she murmured, "and I have the ill-taste to despise Werter, and laugh at nearly all the old Rhine legends."

"I shall do something dreadful if you persist in teasing me in this fashion."

"Poor little thing!" she mocked. "Isn't it cruel to be so thin-skinned?"

"Jennifer! you are incorrigible. You gave promise once of being a very nice sort of girl, but you haven't fulfilled it. You are the most aggravating, tormenting, mocking little fiend that ever wore the shape of a woman."

"Now you are angry I may hear some wholesome, if bitter, truths," remarked this tantalising girl, with perfect coolness. "Go on, please; I am quite prepared to listen with attention, and—and—reverence."

Angus went to her then, and laying his hand upon her shoulder, said entreatingly,—

"Won't you say something kind to your old friend?"

She blushed brightly, and could not meet his gaze, but said quite calmly,—

"Tell me something pretty to say. I am so very stupid in matters like this."

"Do you promise to repeat faithfully all that I dictate?"

"I am not quite so rash; but I am prepared to do anything, say anything, in reason."

"Thank you; I ask no more. Now repeat after me, 'Dear Angus, I am most glad to

welcome you home; of all my friends I value you most.'"

"And this is being reasonable!" cried Jennifer, with light laughter. "I really cannot consent so to foster your already abnormal vanity, Mr. Roy."

He looked disappointed a moment, but, recovering his audacity, quickly said—

"Very well, I shall inflict the punishment I vowed to give you," and with that he, stooping, kissed the upturned face before she was aware of his intention. The hot blood rushed over her throat and brow, as she lifted one small hand and struck him smartly across the cheek. Certainly Jennifer had a high spirit.

"You coward!" she said, in a passion. "You coward to take such a mean advantage of me"; and her eyes literally blazed with outraged dignity.

Angus laughed.

"Blame the season and not me; and you really should not be so angry—it is all your own fault. Why did you deliberately set yourself under that bough of mistletoe?"

"I never noticed it," she stammered, getting more and more angry and confused. "It is a horrid, vulgar practice and ought to be abolished."

"My father hung it there. He does not consider the old custom vulgar; and when we were little you have kissed me many a time without any ado," said Angus, coldly, and he moved to the fireside with an air of dignity.

"When we were little, yes; but—but everything is different now," ventured Jennifer, beginning to be sorry for her ebullition, and ashamed of the words she had used, because dear old Sir Lewis had hung the tempting bough in his son's view.

"Angus, are you very angry?"

"Oh, no, not angry! Why should I be! You only exercised a lady's privilege when you struck me. I hope your wounded pride is satisfied."

"You should not try to sneer," sapiently!

"Your style is not Byronic."

"So you have told me before! I never supposed it was."

Jennifer started to her feet, and went quickly towards him. Had she been the most ardent coquette instead of an innocent, natural English girl she could not have adopted a better method to rivet his affections. Half timidly she touched his arm, and, lifting her sweet eyes to his, said,—

"I am sorry I spoke so hastily. Sometimes I am very rude and ill-tempered; but—but you won't be angry with me on Christmas Day, Angus?"

His heart leaped up at her words, at the pretty entreating look in her eyes, on her face; but he would not yield too easily.

Jennifer ought to be punished for her angry outburst; so he said, stiffly,—

"I suppose I was rightly served for my presumption. I beg your pardon, Miss Egremont."

"Well, you were very rude," she answered. "I could not conceive such a breach of etiquette possible. You know very well you should not have—kissed me," dropping her voice here to a tragic whisper.

"You have your remedy," said Angus, a ripple of fun crossing his face. "You can give it me back again. I shall not grumble."

"How dare you?" she began; then, seeing the fun in his honest eyes, she smiled—

"Oh, how stupid you are! There, Angus, we won't quarrel. I give you my hand upon that. Just for to-day let us play at being friends, and afterwards we can please ourselves; but I won't have mamma disturbed by our silly quarrels. You are quite sure you understand me?"

"Yes. You make your meaning pretty clear; and I, on my part, promise never to transgress again—until you ask me."

She turned her back upon him with huge disdain.

"I am going to mamma! Her conversation with Sir Lewis must be ended now."

He did not strive to stay her, but followed



her lithe form, half-smiling, half-frowning. The Jennifer he had left had been easy to read; this Jennifer was an enigma to him, and perhaps to herself also.

But the remainder of the day passed peacefully enough. At dinner my lady was brighter than she had been at early morning; and when they all met in the drawing-room she played accompaniments for Angus and Jennifer, seeming to enjoy thoroughly the homely quiet of the little circle.

But about ten o'clock there came a violent ringing of the hall-bell, and presently a servant appeared,—

"My lady," he said, "a gentleman below begs to see you. His business is important. He gave the name of Mr. Griffith Wey."

My lady started to her feet, white as death, shivering as though with ague.

"He must be a relation of mine," Jennifer said to Angus; then cried out at my lady's pallor. "Mamma, what is it? Dear mamma, you are ill!"

"Let me see him," said Sir Lewis; "he cannot intimidate me."

#### CHAPTER IV.

"I must see him," my lady answered, faintly. "Perhaps your presence would render him more merciful, and—and he may not yet know the truth."

"You promise to ring if he is violent," Sir Lewis said, very anxiously; and then Jennifer, stealing to her side, wound her arms about her waist, saying piteously,—

"Mamma, has this unpleasant business anything to do with me? Is there nothing I can do to save you pain and trouble?"

"Do not distress yourself, child; there is no wrong so great it cannot be righted. No! no! you are my joy, and not my grief. Sir Lewis, by your leave, I will see Mr. Wey now. Angus, you will console this child, who has no need of comfort." And so, smiling bravely, she went out, and Jennifer, turning quickly towards her host, panted,—

"Tell me the truth. Who is this man who has power to shake mamma thus, to intimidate her (that word was yours, you know). Is it anything to do with her love for and care of me?"

"My dear," said the old gentleman, taking her hand gently in his own. "I am not at liberty to say. My lady's secrets are her own."

"Yes, I know," in a very low voice; "but would it not help her a little if I shared the burden of them? Oh! I could die to save her pain; she has been so much to me! My own mother could not have been kinder or loved me more. I can do nothing in return for all her goodness; and here the girl, whose nerves were all unstrung, burst into tears.

"Yes, you do," Angus broke in, hurriedly. "You make her life brighter. Why, only yesterday she told me that Jennifer was her world, Jennifer was her sunshine."

But the girl was too agitated to listen, and Sir Lewis seeing this himself led her into the conservatories, allowing her to remain quiet, feeling she would the sooner recover her self-possession.

Meanwhile, my lady entered the room where her visitor awaited her. She bowed coldly, and refused to touch the outstretched hand which he offered with the greatest sang froid.

"Your visit is inopportune, Mr. Wey," she said, very calmly. "I regret any servant of mine should have sent you here to annoy my kind host. Tell me your business, quickly, and let me go."

"I am really afraid my business cannot be settled in such an offhand manner, Lady Egremont; and surely, after the lapse of so many years, you will not cherish malice against me, or allow prejudice to bias your actions?"

He waited then for her to speak; but she kept strict silence, so that he was compelled to open the campaign.

"Last night my wife's actions aroused my suspicions, which were increased when she

gave me a packet of notes—your gift. Lady Egremont, you know best why those notes were given. You were not likely to display much generosity to a woman who had deceived and tricked you as Celia Grenoble did. Your motive was revenge upon me."

My lady reared her head high.

"You judge others by yourself, sir. And may I ask what is the meaning of this extraordinary charge?"

"You carry things with a high hand," he retorted, trying to keep his countenance under the scorn in her eyes, "but I shall bring you to terms yet. I say that last night you bribed my wife to longer silence with regard to our child's place of residence. I am not sure but that I could punish you for conspiring to rob me of my daughter."

"Suppose you ascertain how far you can legally proceed against me, and then acquaint me with the result?" my lady said, calmly, although her face was very white, and wore a haunted look. "What reasons have you to suppose that your daughter is in my custody?"

"I saw her in your company to-day."

"I suppose you refer to my ward, Miss—?"

"Jennifer Wey. I tell you candidly it is useless to fight against me. By judicious inquiries at the Hall I learned that, just fourteen years ago last night, a child was mysteriously left in your charge. No one knew her parentage or how she came, but she was called Jennifer—an uncommon name, you will admit. Having learned so much I returned to Needham; and taxing my wife with her crime—professing to know all the truth—learned as much of the story as remained hidden from me. I must have been an arrant fool never to have guessed her place of refuge."

My lady sank upon a chair, and her hands were fast clasped, because before this man she would give no sign of weakness or woe.

"Admitting all this, what is it you propose to do?"

"Take away my daughter from those who have brought her up in ignorance of her father's existence, robbed her so long of his love and his protection."

"Say rather those who have saved her from becoming the vile creature you would have made her, Griffith Wey. If it is money you need say so (you have no delicate scruples) and I will give all that it is in my power to give." "You wrong me," with a wicked smile. "I want only my child; and while I thank you for the care you have expended upon her, the costly education you have given her, I must refuse to allow you longer to detain her. I have some natural feeling still."

"No," she said, almost vehemently, "it is not for love of Jennifer that you would rob me of her. You think to make her your dupe, your decoy, but she is neither stupid nor easily led."

"I shall find means to bend her to my will," he answered confidently.

"Stay. Do you suppose the law would deliver an innocent girl into your evil hands? If you will fight, well, then, let it be so."

"Your ladyship forgets I am the girl's natural guardian for the space of three years yet; and the case against you and my wife, if dexterously told, would look very black indeed. Then, again, you have got to prove me an unfit person to have the custody of a grown daughter. Really, I think, you had better yield with a good grace."

Lady Egremont started to her feet.

"Once I loved you, once I revered you," she said, "although you deserved neither affection nor esteem. But for the sake of those days which I, at least, found good, leave Jennifer with me, and I will agree to allow you such a sum as will free you of all anxieties for the future."

"Just for once your sagacity is at fault, Aline," he said, brutally. "I would not take your proffered gift though I were starving. I want revenge, and I will have it. For fourteen years you have been leagued with my wife against me and my interests, and

now my turn has come. I will bring your proud head low, and wring her heart by making her child the tool for my designs."

"No, no! ah heaven, no! so young she is, and so innocent. Griffith, you owe me reparation—make it now."

"Reparation!" he echoed, with a coarse laugh. "Why, to be poetical, your blessing lay in my forsaking. You lost the needy gentleman, and found the wealthy peer, who died in a conveniently short time, leaving you utterly untrammelled, and mistress of a fine estate."

My lady looked at him with growing horror. "This, then, is the man I once loved, or dreamed I loved," she said, more to herself than to him. "Thank heaven I never was his wife."

He laughed again, then asked—

"When may I see Jennifer?"

"You are resolved, then, to take her from me?" she questioned, with unwonted meekness. "You intend to break my heart and spoil her life?"

"Hearts are not easily broken, and as for spoiling the girl's life that is nonsense. Why, in a week or two she shall love me as she never loved you, and think me the best man on earth. Bring her to me."

"Not now," pleaded my lady. "Do not let us have a scene here."

"If I leave her with you how am I to know you will keep faith with me, or that I shall find you at the Hall to-morrow?"

"I shall be there," quietly, "and I cannot consent to have Jennifer frightened: You are not to forget that she is absolutely ignorant of her parentage, that she believes her mother died long since. At least, leave her with me until to-morrow. Then, if you insist upon your rights, I—I must give way."

She hid her face in her hands then and seemed to weep. The man watching her smiled in a satisfied fashion, then said—

"I will wait until to-morrow (you were never given to falsehood or prevarication). Expect me at eleven thirty. I cannot wait longer, even to please you."

"I will not tax your patience. But how am I to account for your long absence to—to my ward?"

"I leave that to your fertile imagination," scoffingly. "Say what you please, so long as you let me into the secret. Our stories ought not to clash, you know!" and he laughed so odiously she longed to strike him.

Could this be the man she had once loved? This degraded, coarsened creature, who had no shame for his ill-spent life, no pity for his child or the woman whose years he had made so bitter?

"I will tell Jennifer all it is necessary for her to know," Lady Egremont said, with her face still hidden. "I will not blacken you to her. And now leave me. Oh! what a wretched ending to what should be a glad season. The child has been dear to me as my own."

"I accept that speech as a compliment. Good-night, Aline; and if you are only amenable to reason, I may not wholly forbid you access to the girl."

"Leave me," she reiterated, wearily; and without further speech he went out, closing the door noiselessly behind him. In the hall he encountered Sir Lewis.

"Good-night," he said, airily. Then, as the other made no response, added, "Is it possible I am so changed you do not recognise me—Griffith Wey? Yet we were fairly good friends once!"

"Griffith Wey!" repeated the baronet, in a puzzled tone. "Griffith Wey! It seems to me I have heard that name before, but when or where I confess myself puzzled to know."

"I was once nearly being married to Lady Egremont."

"Yes, yes!" suavely. "I remember it all now! and she jilted you. Ah, well! girls will be capricious. Are you going far to-night, Mr. Wey?"

"To Needham. Isn't there a quick cut across the fields?"

"Certainly, certainly," speaking with alacrity, and at the same time flinging wide the hall door. Shall I show it you?"

"I could not think of giving so much trouble," began Wey, when the baronet interrupted him.

"I should esteem it a pleasure, sir. Fact is, I make it a rule to welcome the coming and speed the parting, and if I can help you on your way I shall be glad. So take the first turning to the right, and confound you, if this don't take you to it, I'm a bad marksman." He suddenly dealt the astonished Wey such a kick as landed him in the centre of the sodden path; and then, with a roar of laughter, slammed the door, and went back to my lady, leaving Wey swearing in the open.

She was leaning against the mantel sobbing as though her heart would break; and the man's kindly, honest, soul was full of compassion as he took her slender hands in his and bade her tell him all.

This she did with many pauses, many tears, and when she had finished, he asked gently—"What is it you intend doing? Will you give our little lass up?"

"Never, if heaven will give me strength to keep her. Oh! my kind friend, tell me what to do?"

"I said this morning we must get her married. Let me call Angus. If he is willing—and I know he is—"

"We are not sure that Jennifer is. I do not believe she has a thought of love or lovers; but Angus shall plead his own cause if he wishes, since in marriage lies her only safety."

So Angus was called in, and after stating Jennifer's case to him, his father said—

"Am I mistaken, or do you love my little favourite. And are you willing to marry her at all risks, and with all speed?"

"I would make her my wife to-morrow if she would let me," the young fellow answered, blushing, hotly. "But I think she does not like me."

"Nonsense. Why should she not? Let me send for her, and she shall answer for herself," began Sir Lewis, almost boisterously. "You aren't a bad sort of a fellow. You're well born, moderately rich, and not quite such a fool as you look. What objections can she raise to such a match?"

"I think, Sir Lewis," said my lady, smiling, despite her heavy grief; "it would be wisest for me to interview Jennifer. You hardly understand a young girl's nature."

"Et tu Brute! Well, you may be right; but suppose the lass is so foolish as to refuse my boy. What are you going to do then?"

"I don't know! But you will help me to think. I trust to you, dear friend."

"I shall not fail you," stoutly. "I'll go through fire and water for you and the girl if it is necessary. Come, Angus, we are not wanted. Jennifer shall join you shortly."

So they went away together, the father bidding the son be of good cheer, and "if she says no (because the best of women will, even when they mean yes), just laugh at her, and affect to disbelieve her. Never put too low a value on yourself, and—and—ah! my dear! you stole upon us so noiselessly, that I declare I am so shaken I am glad of the boy's support. Go now to your mamma; she has something to say to you."

"Sir Lewis!" the girl murmured; "something dreadful has happened. There is mystery and trouble in the very air. Will you not tell me the truth?"

"Tut! Tut! Everything is right. What a fantastic creature you are!"

"Angus," entreatingly. "You will not put me aside with a jest?"

"Dear Jennifer, there is no cause for distress. Something unpleasant has occurred, but if you will only listen to Lady Egremont all will be right. Let me take you to her now."

"No, no, I will go alone. But I am afraid,"

and wrenching her little hands from his she hurried away.

My lady met her with outstretched arms, and folding her close, sobbed rather than said—

"My dear one, my dear one, in all that I say or do to-night believe I seek only your good, your happiness."

"I do believe it, mamma, and with all my heart I thank you!"

## CHAPTER V.

"Do not be alarmed, for although a great danger threatens you we have found a way of escape for you, if only you will consent to take it."

Jennifer was very pale, and trembled slightly, but otherwise she did not lose her courage and self-control.

"What is that danger, mamma? Do not be afraid of confiding it to me; I shall not shrink."

"It is my wish you should remain in ignorance of the whole truth—at least, for awhile. Remember, I am studying your good. But this I will tell you. The threatened blow is to be aimed by—one of your father's family, and if it falls it means separation for us."

"We are to be parted? Oh, no, mamma; they shall never take me from you. My love and duty are alike yours."

"But, Jennifer, the law will sanction their claim."

The deep grey eyes grew wild, and a look of fear for a moment transfigured the young, sweet face; then she said, in a low shaken voice—

"All these years my relations have left me severely alone. Why should they wish to recognise me now? I will not go! I will not leave you! Tell me how to escape them and the law?"

"Dear heart, by becoming a wife. Have you not guessed that Angus loves you, is willing to marry you as soon as matters can be arranged? Is it impossible for you to consent?"

Jennifer was silent a moment, then she said—

"Mamma, I want to please you, and there is scarcely anything I would not do for you. But tell me truly, because all my life's happiness is at stake, do you think I ought to save myself by the sacrifice of—of Mr. Roy's joy? Do you think he would care to marry me, knowing I do not love him? or that we should be happy together with the affection all on one side?"

"But, Jennifer, is it impossible to love him? Is there anyone else?"

"No, no," with a swift blush. "But, mamma, I would be afraid to promise so much, and give so little. Should I not be desecrating my marriage vows?"

"If you feel thus I have no more to say," my lady answered, sadly. "What shall I tell Angus? This will be a heavy blow to him."

"Say that I thank him for the honour he has done me, that I am not unmindful of his generosity; but that I will not wrong him so greatly as to accept the sacrifice he proposes. Oh, mamma! is there no other hope for us?"

"Yes; but a slender one. Having decided as you have, your only remaining chance is immediate flight. I cannot accompany you—we should be the more easily traced; but I will join you when the hue-and-cry your disappearance will cause has died out. Stay! I will send for Sir Lewis. He must be our support now."

"He will be angry with me for—for my rejection of Angus."

"He will not, although he will doubtless be grieved; but neither he nor I would think of 'coercing you,' and then she rang the bell, and a servant appearing, she requested that Sir Lewis should be told that his presence was at once required.

He came with all possible despatch, and my lady said—

"Dear friend, you must not be displeased that Jennifer cannot answer as we wished. I

am sure you will agree it is best her inclination should not be forced!"

"I am very sorry, for my own sake, as well as the lad's. But if Jennifer is not to be won he must bear his pain like a man, and being so young he may forget."

"Yes," cried the girl, eagerly. "It is all so sudden, and perhaps he is mistaken in believing he cares for me in—that way."

"I am afraid not, and you would not call an attachment sudden that dates quite back to boyhood. There, there, child, don't look so distressed! Sit down by me here, and let us discuss your future."

"I think," said my lady, "you will agree with me, that there is nothing left us to do but to convey Jennifer secretly, and at once, to some safe place. Now, if I accompany her, we shall certainly be traced. Sir Lewis, dare I ask you to undertake this errand?"

"Of course you dare," heartily. "What is the destination?"

"Dinan. I have a very distant relative living there, who ekes out a scanty income by taking in boarders. She is middle-aged, prudent, and kind."

"Just the right sort of lady for our purpose. When do we start?"

"To-night, if you please. There is plenty of time to catch the mail-train to Dover. Will you order out the carriage, whilst Jennifer and I get our belongings? We shall drive straight to the Hall, whilst you go on to the station and secure tickets. It will not do for you to leave Collaworth with Jennifer. You must travel separately until you reach Dover. Danvers (my maid, you know) is trustworthy; and I will contrive so that she and the child leave the Hall unnoticed by the servants; and having seen Jennifer safely locked in her carriage, she will return to the Hall, and be admitted by me through the library window. Do my plans meet with your approval?"

"Nothing could be better! We have a crafty villain to deal with, and must be cautious. Well! well!—this is a sad ending to our Christmas; but we must look forward to happier times, when we shall be united without any fear of separation."

Then he kissed Jennifer, and went away to order the carriage, whilst the ladies enveloped themselves in their wraps.

Of course, Angus had to be told Jennifer's decision, and when she came out into the hall she found him standing there, very pale and grave, but with a certain dignity about his whole mien, that was foreign to him in the girl's experience.

"You will not refuse to wish me good-bye!" he said, gently. And then Jennifer, being much shaken with recent events, and sorely troubled because of the pain she had unwittingly given, burst into tears, begging him brokenly to forgive and forget her.

"I can readily do the first," he said, gently. "but I shall never do the second. Do not distress yourself, dear, or be angry with me when I say I shall never give up all hope until I know you are the promised wife of another man. And remember always, whatever happens, even should you never learn the lesson I so long to teach you, I am still your friend, and shall esteem myself happy to serve you in all your needs."

She lifted a tear-stained, piteous face to his. "I cannot thank you, I cannot thank you. I dare hardly entreat anything of you. But, oh! if you will care for her whilst I am away—she will be so lonely. I am all she has, and we have got to part."

"Your wish shall be sacred. I will try to be as a son to her. Jennifer, will you sometimes write to me?"

"If you wish it, yes; and now good-bye. I—I shall break utterly down if I stay longer," and with that she gave him her hand; but he drew her nearer, and saying, "Forgive me," kissed her brow once, and so loosed her and let her go, out into the dark night, out into the untried life before her.



She spoke no word throughout the journey home, neither did she weep again. And when at last the Hall was reached, she went with my lady to her room, and quietly assisted in putting together such few things as she must take with her.

Then Danvers came in, and so much of the story as was necessary to be told was confessed to her under promise of secrecy.

There was now no time to spare. The last farewell must be spoken, the last kiss given. My lady held out her arms to her ward.

"Come, my child!" and like a child Jennifer crept upon that loving embrace, bowing her head upon the tender breast. And so they stood silent for a moment. Then my lady lifted the pale young face gently, and pressed her mouth a moment to the quivering lips. Not a word passed between them. The parting—more cruel than death—left no strength or courage for speech.

Noislessly the maid and the girl issued from the library window, my lady watching with wide, tearless eyes; and walking quickly they soon left the dark grounds behind, and so came to the darker road beyond.

On the very primitive platform Sir Lewis was waiting them. He wore a slouched hat, and the collar of his coat was turned up, so that scarcely anything could be seen of his face.

The station-master did not recognise him; and the one porter, having imbibed a little too freely of strong drink, could not tell on the following morning who left in the Dover mail.

Jennifer in passing Sir Lewis bowed slightly, and was walking on, when she felt a ticket thrust into her hand, and heard a hoarse whisper, "Don't pay any further attention to me"; then, having secured an empty carriage, she bade Danvers good-bye, and was soon being whirled towards Dover.

"Is all safe?" questioned my lady as the maid tapped quietly at the library window. "Are you quite sure there was no blunder made?"

"Quite, my lady. Miss Jennifer has got away nicely; and now, if you please, may I get you some refreshment. I beg your pardon, my lady, but you look so ill and harassed!"

"I want nothing, thank you, Danvers, nothing but peace of mind," she added to herself; and going to her room fell on her knees, crying with exceeding bitterness—

"My darling! oh, my darling! heaven help me! heaven keep you safe!"

*The second and concluding instalment of this bright and reasonable Noirette will appear next week.*

**HANDLING THE CHINESE MAIL.**—Many persons suppose that a Chinese interpreter is employed in the post office expressly to handle the Chinese mail. But this is not the case. When a Chinaman wishes to send a letter to his native country, he must employ the services of an interpreter, unless he can write English himself. He writes, seals, and directs the envelope in his own language. He then goes to a Chinese interpreter, who writes the address in English on another part of the envelope. The letter is then ready for the mail. It goes through the post office, and then takes a journey across the country to San Francisco. A China-bound steamer conveys it across the ocean to its destination, where, after going through the China post office, it is delivered to the person to whom it is addressed. The incoming mails are handled in much the same way. An interpreter in the Chinese post office writes the address in English on all mails directed to this country. When a letter reaches the post office, the clerks never pay any attention to the name, and not one time in ten thousand do they know whether a letter is for a Chinaman or somebody else. They only look for the street and number. The mail is sorted, and is then delivered by the carrier. So what seems a very complicated process, is, indeed, a very simple one, causing no inconvenience whatever.

## Tram Car Etiquette—For Ladies

By UNCLE BENJAMIN.

Stop all the cars that come along, for fear you may not get the right one. Don't pay any attention to the names of the streets painted on the signs in front or on the sides of the cars. Remember that signs are a delusion. They are only put on to confuse people.

Always ask both the conductor and the driver where the car goes to. One of them might lie to you. And it would be well enough to ask some of the passengers, too, lest the driver and conductor should be in collusion to deceive you. After you signal a car, always stop to talk a few minutes to an acquaintance; you pay your fare, and, of course, you have a right to expect the car will wait for you. It gives the driver a rest, too. When you step into the car, always stop a while in the door and look around the car to see where the best seat is.

Take hold of everybody as you pass along; it will help you to keep your balance; and if you can step on the toes of those who are seated, it will aid you in feeling your way. Be sure and have your arms full of bundles. No woman is properly equipped for train car travelling without bundles, and plenty of them. Drop some packages. It will keep things lively, and variety is the spice of life.

If there are no vacant seats, stare at any gentleman who may be sitting. If you do the thing properly, he won't be able to stand it long. He will get up and go out on the platform, to gaze upon the scenery, and you can take his seat. By no means thank him for it. It is not proper to speak to a stranger.

After you are seated, look about you at the other women. See how their dresses are trimmed. Notice whether they wear real hair, and if they paint. Count the rings on their fingers. Peer closely into their faces to see if they use powder or bloom of youth. Turn up your nose, and turn your back to all those unfashionably dressed. It will show them that you are somebody.

When the conductor comes along give him half a crown from which to take your penny fare.

Be sure never to have any change.

Be sure and pull the bell yourself, because you will be likely to amuse the conductor when he finds you have jerked the strap the wrong way.

When, at last, you do get off, it is well to leave a bundle behind you, and just as the car starts, signal the conductor, and have him bring it out to you. You have paid your fare, and have a right to be waited on.

Now you are all right, and can sail along with the crowd, and look into the shop windows, and buy a few more things to be put into bundles, and then you will be all ready to begin to look out for a car to take you home.

## THE WOOD

Wouldst find a balm more sweet than gift of tears;

Thou who are bruised by stress of sordid things—

The dull routine, the thwarted hope that stings,

The cold ingratitude that numbs and sears! Go forth and comfort thee where now the year's

Cathedral aisles are dim. The thrush here sings

A golden psalm of joy; the bluebell swings its frail and fluted censers. Cast thy fears, And loose the bonds that anchor thee to care;

For here the light so gently falls it seems A gracious benediction after prayer—

By mystic murmurs from her hidden streams,

By violets strewn where paths are trodden bare,

Thou knowest the wood will not deny thy dreams!

## A Well-kept Secret.

A story of skill and power, of constantly increasing interest, will be placed before our readers

**NEXT WEEK,**

and is sure to command popular attention. It is entitled,

## "EILEEN'S ROMANCE."

BY

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The opening instalment will appear in our

**NEXT ISSUE.**

## Gleanings

**CURE FOR HAY FEVER.**—The most foolish of all the ailments of life is hay fever. And hitherto no cure has been discovered. But hay fever, it has just been established, can be frozen out of one. A patient who has tried this cure declares it to be infallible. He went one day, on the recommendation of a friend who had been similarly afflicted, to the cold storage vaults of a wholesale provision dealer. He wandered for nearly an hour among the carcasses of frozen bullocks, chickens and hams in a temperature twenty degrees below freezing point, and since then has neither sneezed nor wanted to. The remedy is simple, exciting, and rational.

**LONG VIEWS.**—Persons who wish to put off the evil day of spectacles should accustom themselves to long views. The eye is always relieved, and sees better if, after reading awhile, we direct the sight to some far distant object, even for a minute. Great travellers and hunters are seldom near-sighted. Sailors discern objects at a great distance with considerable distinctness when a common eye sees nothing at all. One is reported to have such acute sight that he could tell when he was going to see an object. On one occasion, when the ship was in a sinking condition, and all were exceedingly anxious for a sight of land, he reported from the look-out that he could not exactly see the shore, but could pretty nearly do so.

**MARKET QUOTATIONS OF BEAUTY.**—A young woman recently lost her nose, and the company awarded her eighteen thousand dollars for damages, with all the expenses of nurses, doctors and specialists. Now one wishes to know whether a nose ranks higher in the beauty market than any other feature? Would a chin be worth ten thousand or twenty-five thousand dollars? An eye has a value as an ornament and also as an instrument. What about the price to be set upon a smooth and rounded cheek? And would it be profane to speculate on the market quotations of a dimple? If the man who wrote that—for, of course, it was a man—had stopped to apply the usual rule of commerce, that of supply and demand, he would not have propounded his apparent conundrum. As long as there are men in the world with an eye for feminine beauty there will be an enormous price set on that commodity. When one reflects how many men will propose to a dimple and a picture hat, one is not amazed that women will strive by every means possible and impossible to obtain those beautifiers.

**NATURAL ATTRACTION.**—As a rule, big men are shy and lacking in assurance. A daughter of the gods, divinely tall, fills them with something like terror. The woman who appeals to them is usually some sparkling, vivacious, fairy-like creature with kittenish way and roguish glances. The little man, on the contrary, is seldom burdened with humility. He is a being of great aspirations and stupendous ambitions; he believes in himself, which is the reason why he generally can get the woman of his choice to smile upon him. The dainty, wee, Titania-like woman possesses no charms for him. "A nice little thing," he says of such a one. "Fall in love with her? Oh, no! She isn't grown up enough to inspire the tender passion." He likes a woman to be one or two inches his superior and thoroughly mature. He dreads any trace of the bread-and-butter school-girl. His ideal resembles the strong, heroic women Shakespeare has pictured, full-blooded and vital, full of character and spirit, with a fair spice of temper. The big man dreads a woman's tongue. He is alarmed at the lighting of her eyes, when they flash in anger; but the little man is amused, and rather likes it. That's one of the subtle secrets of the little man's mastery. Tall and willowy, with the promise of richer, rounder curves as years go by is the ideal of the little man. He admires a regal carriage, a touch of hauteur, and, above all, style.

**NEW USES FOR PAPER.**—Among the new uses to which paper is being put are artificial teeth and "uppers" for boots and shoes. The old saying, "There is nothing like leather," may some time be changed to "There's nothing like paper." At this very moment a substantial business firm in Boston is considering a proposition to take up the work of manufacturing paper hats. By-and-by a high hat, dress suit and shoes rivaling patent leathers, all made of paper, may be considered quite the correct thing. The paper age may astonish the world to a greater degree than any that have preceded it.

**WASHING IN THE ORIENT.**—The Japanese rip their garments apart for every washing, and they iron their clothes by spreading them on a flat board and leaning this up against the house to dry. The sun takes the wrinkles out of the clothes, and some of them have quite a lustre. The Japanese woman does her washing out of doors. Her washtub is not more than six inches high. The hardest worked washerwomen in the world are the Koreans. They have to wash about a dozen dresses for their husbands, and they have plenty to do. The washing is usually done in cold water, and often in running streams. The clothes are pounded with paddles until they shine like a shirt front from a laundry.

**WHAT HE WAS DOING.**—The other day the proprietor of a large hotel advertised for a cellarman. The next day an Irishman applied for the vacancy. As it happened, the landlord knew him to be a man from the town, and also to be the biggest drinker in the place. Being pressed for a man, owing to the busy season, the landlord engaged him, on the condition that Pat was to keep on whistling when working in the cellar. The next day Pat started on his new job, and he hadn't been in the cellar more than five minutes when he stopped whistling. The landlord, suspecting that his man was drinking, shouted out to him from the bar: "Pat, what are you doing now?" The reply came back at the top of Pat's voice: "Changing my tune, sor."

**APPLES FOR SLEEPLESSNESS.**—The apple is such a common fruit that very few persons are familiar with its remarkably efficacious medicinal properties. Everybody ought to know that the very best thing they can do is to eat apples just before retiring for the night. Persons uninitiated in the mysteries of the fruit are liable to throw up their hands in horror at the visions of dyspepsia which such a suggestion may summon up, but no harm can come even to a delicate system by the eating of ripe and juicy apples before going to bed. The apple is excellent brain food, because it has more phosphoric acid in easily digested shape than any other fruits. It excites the action of the liver, promotes sound and healthy sleep, and thoroughly disinfects the mouth. This is not all; the apple prevents indigestion and throat diseases.

**EYES AND HANDS.**—The importance of having eyes in one's head and using them is often insisted upon. We are now given more definite instructions as to how we are to use them. Dr. Francis Warner insists that a child should be taught to move his eyes in his head instead of growing up in the habit, tending to dullness, of moving his head whenever he moved his eyes. Incidentally, the doctor told of a Lombard Street banker, who would never engage clerks who had not learnt to move their eyes, his opinion being that ledgers were not safe under the slow scrutiny of such persons. Dr. Warner mentioned why and how the hands should be trained. He thinks the teacher might usefully move the fingers on one hand of the pupil, bidding him or her reproduce the movements on the fingers of the other. It would argue quickness in a child of seven, the lecturer holds, to respond with accuracy to that test. Then, too, it would be found "very educative" if little ones were set the task of imitating movements of their instructors' fingers. Dr. Warner suggested that the minimum of speech should be employed during these exercises, that nervous children might be more composed.

**SCOURING WOOL.**—Our ancestors scoured their wool in tubs, much as our wives and daughters scour our clothes to-day. In the hand washing of wool a tub was filled with the suds, in which one or two men with long poles stirred the wool until clean, when they lifted it upon a travelling apron, which carried it between a pair of rollers which squeezed out the water. The same principle is applied in the automatic scouring now in vogue. Great forks or rakes seize the wool as it is carried by rollers from a feeding apron into the iron tanks, and by alternating motions of their teeth give it a thorough scouring. Thus cleansed, the wool is delivered by rollers to the drying machines, where hot air and great fans are now utilised to extract all the moisture without tearing the fibre.

**CHARLES II. AT THE GUILDHALL.**—Charles II. dined at the Guildhall nine times, and on one occasion, when Sir Robert Viner was Lord Mayor, Charles found himself, according to the "Spectator," in a rather embarrassing situation. The Lord Mayor, getting elated with continually toasting the Royal Family, grew a little too fond of His Majesty, who stole off, and made towards his coach in Guildhall Yard. "But the Mayor liked his company so well and was grown so intimate that he pursued him hastily, and catching him fast by the hand, cried out with a vehement oath and accent, 'Sir, you shall stay and take t'other bottle!'" The King looked kindly at the Lord Mayor over his shoulder, and with a smile and graceful air repeated the words of the old song:—"He that is drunk is as great as a king," and went back with his host.

**NO LONGER POPULAR.**—In America the bicycle craze is over; the wheel is now merely a medium of travel, not a valued toy. In France, however, it is still popular as an implement of sport. At some of the seaside places several new games are in vogue, in which bicycles play a great part. In grounds or parks bicyclists of both sexes go in zigzag fashion round rows of flower-pots into which they have to fling potatoes. There are, besides, hurdle races for bicyclists, the hurdles being sacks filled with sawdust, zigzag runs amid rows of tennis balls, glove and parasol contests, and "musical chairs." In the glove and parasol competitions people have to show their skill in twice pulling off and on the gloves and in twice opening and shutting the parasols. In musical chairs the rules of the children's game are observed with this addition, that until the music ceases the players ride round on their cycles. Then they have to rush for their seats. And when the music begins again all must get astride their bicycles and so on until only two chairs are left to be fought for.

**WHEN WIVES ARE AT A PREMIUM.**—Australia could take nearly three hundred thousand wives. That would give each Australian male a chance, which he has not at present, of marrying one wife, and it would give three hundred thousand English or Scottish women, who are bound to die old maids if they remain in their own country, a chance of capturing a husband. More than this, every woman who goes out and marries an Australian may die the wife of a millionaire mine owner, or live to inherit more sheep than she can count. Then there is Canada. Canada is in need of ninety thousand British wives. At present a number of Canadians have to cross the border and induce our fair girls to forsake the Stars and Stripes. Canadian husbands being reputedly the best in the world, they succeed fairly well. Cape Colony is short of the fair sex to the number of twenty-five or thirty thousand. And, what with diamonds and gold, and the finest climate in the world, it offers attractions enough. Certainly those ladies who have had the enterprise to go there do not regret it. There are very nearly a million too many women in the British Islands, a discouraging fact for the English girl who has no inclination to spend her life in single blessedness. Yet why should she when wives are at a premium in so many parts of the English-speaking world?



## Facetiæ

LECTURER: "Man is his own master." Voice (in gallery): "When his wife isn't around."

FIRST BOY (to second boy who has been fishing): "Catch anything?" Second Boy: "I haven't been home yet."

AN advertisement in an Irish newspaper calls for information as to the whereabouts of a certain person, "dead or alive."

HE (at breakfast): "Are you fond of fish-balls?" She (from the country): "Oh, I don't know; I never attended any."

A LITTLE girl was once punished for doing wrong, when she said: "Oh, those commandments do break awfully easy."

"Well, darling, what was the text?" "I'm not quite sure, papa, but it sounded like 'Many are cold, but few are frozen!'"

MISS PITH: "What are you reading, dear?" Miss Smith: "'A Model Man.' It is dreadfully stupid." Miss Pith: "Yes, they usually are."

"PAPA, what is a self-taught man?" "Why, one who is his own teacher, Fritz." "But, papa, how could he be examined, then?"

MOTHER (trying to persuade her children to go to bed): "The chickens, you know, dears, go to bed at sundown." Maudie (an observant child): "Yes, mother, but the old hen goes too."

PA: "Have you seen with the microscope all the little animals that are in the water?" Tommy: "Yes, papa, I saw them. Are they in the water we drink?" "Certainly, my child." "Now I know what makes the singing in the tea-kettle when the water begins to boil."

"Isn't Jones a Christian Scientist—a believer in the faith cure?" "He is." "Is it true that he wouldn't have a doctor to his wife the other day when she was sick?" "It is quite true." "Well, I saw a doctor go into the house just now." "Oh, that's all right. He's sick now himself."

INDIFFERENT PORTRAIT PAINTER (to blunt friend): "I suppose I break a Bible commandment every day." Blunt Friend: "What commandment is that?" "That which we find in Exodus, 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness,' etc." "When did you ever make any likeness?"

SAID a matter-of-fact man to an æsthetic dæmel who was talking about "beautifying property"—"the most charming decoration for a plate is a good piece of beef steak, with well-cooked potatoes, and just a sufficiency of gravy. It will beat trailing vines or a sun-flower any day in the week."

PUNISHMENT BY MARRIAGE.—Miss Tablette: "The wretch! and so he has been proposing to both of us?" Miss Brenton: "It seems so." Miss Tablette: "I wish we could think of some horrible way to punish him." Miss Brenton: "I have it." Miss Tablette: "What is it?" Miss Brenton: "You marry him, dear."

MR. WALDO (at evening entertainment): "Do you know that very brilliant-looking woman at the piano, Miss Breezy?" Miss Breezy: "Oh, yes, intimately. I will be glad to present you, Mr. Waldo." Mr. Waldo: "Thanks; is she an unmarried lady?" Miss Breezy: "Yes, she has been unmarried twice."

As a Scotch fair a farmer was trying to engage a lad to assist on the farm, but could not finish the bargain until he brought a character from the last place, so he said: "Run and get it, and meet me at the cross at four o'clock." The youth was up to time, and the farmer said, "Well, have you got your character with you?" "Na," replied the youth; "but I've got yours, and I'm no' comin'."

SMOTE the enemy hip and thigh, was the text read, but little Johnny rendered it in his Sunday-school class, "Smote the enemy with a hip, hip, hurra!"

DEPOSITOR: "Is the cashier in?" President: "No, he has gone away." Depositor: "Ah! Gone for a rest, I presume?" President (sadly): "No; to avoid arrest."

"SEARICKNESS," says a modern wit, "is like a belief in ghosts; no one will admit that it troubles him, but everyone has misgivings on the subject."

WIFE: "An' did ye have an answer ready for the blackguard?" Husband: "Yes, DeMa, I had a foine answer ready for him, but I couldn't find it when I wanted to use it."

QUIGGS: "I tell you what, Boggs, I had an experience to-day that made my hair stand on end." Boggs: "What was it?" Quiggs: "Shampoo."

AN indulgent father bought for his nineteen-months old boy a hobby horse, a cart, a stuffed monkey, etc. Next morning the little toddler looked at his toys in a matter-of-fact sort of way, and then picked two chicken bones from a table and played with them all the morning.

LIEUTENANT (to a comrade): "The marriage question is an awful bore. A handsome woman without money my father won't hear of. An ugly party with money is not to my taste. A beautiful girl with money—her fether objects. An ugly woman without money is out of the question."

"YOUR expression is not such as would please your father, my dear," was the comment a Hartford lady made to her daughter, who was putting in her two hours' practice on the piano. "And his expressions about my playing never please me. They are just horrid."

"WHY do they call these blackberries?" asked the small boy of the grocer. "Because they are black," was the prompt reply. "Then why do they call these other black ones raspberries?" "Because—because—you move on! What are you hanging around here for anyhow?"

LATE one evening a doctor received a note from a couple of fellow-practitioners, saying: "Pray step across to the club; we are one short for a rubber." "Emily, dear," he then said to his wife, "I am called away again. It appears to be a very serious case, for there are two doctors already in attendance."

MR. SINGLEMAN (studying lady's portrait on the wall with a sigh): "How long it is since I have gazed upon that face. Look at those eyes, Blunt—that form—a perfect Hebe. I narrowly escaped marrying that angelic creature." Mr. Blunt (sarcastically): "Well, I suppose it was a narrow escape—for her."

"YOU take your life in your own hand when you travel in this tramcar," said one passenger to another. "Why, the tramcars travel so slowly I can't see how fatal accidents can occur." "That's it exactly. You are likely to die of old age before you reach the end of the line."

REGINALD: "I love you, Madeline. For you I would give up family, position, wealth." Madeline: "Hold, Reginald. Giving up family is all right—I fain would be spared a mother-in-law—give up your position if you can get a better one, but for heaven's sake hold on to your wealth. We may need it."

"AUNT, what have you brought me?" is Stanley's first question when visitors come. His mother took him severely to task about it, and the little fellow promised not to do so any more. A day or two after one of his aunts called again, and Stanley, with a triumphant glance at his mother exclaimed: "Aunt, what have you brought my little brother?"

FOND RECOLLECTIONS.—She: "You haven't brought me a box of chocolate since we were married." He: "Yes, but think of the tons I brought you before we were married."

FRIEND: "You have only been married two weeks and you are fighting already, so I hear." Mrs. Young: "Yes, life's too short to waste any time. I ought to have tackled him two weeks ago."

"DAD can tell the time without looking at his watch," said little Johnnie. "When I ask him in the morning he says it is time to get up, and when I ask him at night he says it is time to go to bed."

"YOU seem to be rather battered," said the signet ring to a solitaire, as they lay side by side in a pawnbroker's show-case. "I have figured in many engagements," replied the latter sadly.

A WRITER says, "A woman thirsts for a new bonnet like her neighbours." If he had said, "A woman thirsts for a new bonnet a little more stylish than her neighbours," he would have come much nearer the mark.

CONTRACTED QUARTERS.—Flat Agent: "Madam, I told you distinctly that no children were allowed here." Tenant: "We have none." Agent: "Then how did these walls get all banged up?" Tenant: "That comes from our elbows."

MRS. FLANNAGAN: "This, mum, is me twin bye, Micky." Mrs. Smiley: "Indeed! And where is your brother?" Mrs. Flannagan: "Sure he's over to his mother's house, Mrs. Riley. Her Jamesy and me Micky is twins, mum, born the same day."

DUMLEY (who had been asked to carve the duck and is meeting with poor success): "Whew!" Landlady: "Isn't the knife sharp, Mr. Dumley? I had it ground to-day." Dumley: "The knife is all right, Mrs. Henricks; you ought to have had the duck ground."

A TENDER SPOUSE.—Wife: "Here comes a friend of mine. Let's turn into this side street until she passes." Husband: "Quarrelled with her?" "No, but I don't want to see her." "Hum! Why not?" "I know you'll admire that new dress of hers, and it will only worry you to think what a ridiculous fuss you made over the bills for this cheap thing I've got on."

DURING a shower a man carrying a very wet umbrella entered an hotel to pay a call to someone upstairs. After placing his umbrella where it might drain, he wrote upon a piece of paper and pinned to it the sentence: "N.B.—This umbrella belongs to a man who strikes a 250lb. blow. Back in fifteen minutes." He went his way upstairs, and, after an absence of fifteen minutes, returned, to find his umbrella gone, and in its place a note reading: "P.S.—Umbrella taken by a man who walks ten miles an hour. Won't be back at all."

THE SHOVEL DID IT.—He came home some nights ago a bit tired from a busy day's work, and his wife waited until he had got off his overcoat and sat down. "Did you get that piece of silk I asked you to bring?" she inquired, seeing that he had not laid it before her. "Yes, dear; I left it out there in the hall." "Did you get the pins?" "Yes, dear." "And the ribbon?" "Yes." "And a hearth-broom?" "Yes." "And a wick for the kitchen lamp?" "Yes." "And some matches?" "Yes; they are with the other bundles." "And did you see the man about the coal?" "Yes; it will be up on Monday." "And the man to fix the grate in the dinner room?" "Yes; he's coming as soon as he can." "And did you go and pay the gas bill?" "Yes, dear." "And—and—oh, yes, did you order a new shovel for the kitchen?" "N—n—no," he hesitated; "I forgot it." "Good gracious!" she exclaimed. "What did you do that for? You know we needed that shovel, and I told you about it the very first thing when you went to town this morning. I do think you men are the most forgetful and most careless creatures that ever lived." And she was cross for the rest of the evening.

# A DESPERATE DEED

## SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Harold, Earl of Silverdale, is spending the Christmas holidays at Woodville Honour. His host, Sir Stuart Woodville, has twin daughters, Lillian and Marguerite, who bear such a striking resemblance to each other that a stranger finds it extremely difficult to distinguish between them. Marguerite has already a dark page in her young life; while Lillian has given her maiden confidence and love to the Earl, and a marriage is speedily arranged. The Earl and Countess of Silverdale are returning from their honeymoon, and, while staying in London for a few days, a telegram reaches the Earl, stating that his daughter Iva, by his first wife, has been injured in a fire. The Earl at once leaves for Belgium. During his absence Lillian agrees with Marguerite to return quietly to their Sussex home. They are detained on the way owing to an accident. Lillian is mistaken a second time for Marguerite by Reuben Garratt who holds her sister's secret. He had followed Lillian to her room at the hotel, and she, terrified at his threats, is powerless to say a word, when he fires, and she falls lifeless. Marguerite, finding the body a little later, takes in the situation at a glance, and determines that she, Marguerite Woodville, is dead, and that Lillian, Countess of Silverdale, still lives.

Marguerite's (as we will continue to call her) first interview with the Earl passes off successfully. Reuben Garratt, finding her an easy prey (but still believing her to be Lillian), determines to throw her child by Sir Geoffrey Damyn on her hands. Sir Geoffrey, to Marguerite's consternation, is about to visit her husband.

## CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

**S**o he had come at last! He was plain Captain Damyn in the old days—that was before he had fallen heir to a baronetcy—Sir Geoffrey Damyn now.

"Oh!" she said, softly. "When did he arrive?"

"Soon after the others went. He drove in by the western lodge. Why, there is the first bell. You will barely have time to dress for dinner, love. Shall I ring for Jane?"

There were others coming this evening—the Rector, a young officer from Rothlyn, and a Mrs. Holdstrom and her daughter.

Their presence would be a relief; but she did so dread the first meeting. If it were only over!

"Oh, it never takes me long to dress!" she answered, haughtily. "I shall be down in ten minutes. Here is Jane—now go!"

For just a minute he made no motion to obey her smiling, imperative dismissal.

He stood looking at her with an abstracted vaguely-troubled face.

How oddly Lillian had changed! In what particular?—that he could not have told. But now and then it struck him with a queer sense of pain that he did not love his wife as passionately as he loved the girl he wooed on New Year's morning, in the bright breakfast-room of the Honour.

He shook himself impatiently, turned, went out.

If his affection was less fervent than it had been in the early days of his wedded life, the shame was his.

She was all that was sweet and fair and noble.

In the drawing-room Iva and Sir Geoffrey stood and chatted gaily.

He was telling her of mutual friends whom he had met abroad, and many mirthful reminiscences were cropping up with the mention of their names.

"It makes one feel the age of Methuselah, this looking backward," he said. "Why, you were just a little girl when last I saw you?"

"I recollect. It was class day at Harrow. I was there with my mother's people."

"The Mordaunts—yes. You were very young when your mother died?"

"A mere baby—yes. But I have a new mother now, you know. She is not much older than I."

"Yes, I heard about the Earl's marriage. His wife was a Woodville, was she not?"

His voice had become serious, almost sad. Iva glanced up.

A fine-looking man, whose age was somewhere in the thirties, this Sir Geoffrey Damyn. His face was pale, delicate-featured, aristocratic. The wavy hair was of brownish gold; the eyes were black and regarded you directly, if very gravely.

"Yes. Her sister died a couple of months ago, so we are very quiet this year."

His lips closed firmly under his fair moustache.

"You mean Miss Marguerite Woodville?"

"Yes."

He looked at her with curiously gloomy eyes.

"I heard of that," he said.

A silence fell upon them.

"I think we are going to have snow," Iva said, walking toward the window.

A very stately, beautiful girl, this daughter of Lord Silverdale, Geoffrey Damyn decided.

Had she a lover? he wondered. It would not be long before all the young gallants of the county would be at her feet. Well, if one could judge the soul by looking in through the eyes, its wonderful windows, he would be a happy man who would win her—a happy and a proud man.

Pshaw! What business was it of his, after all?

He passed his hand wearily over his forehead.

He had had his dream of love. Sweet it was while it lasted. Well, it was over and done with now.

He walked up the room to where Iva stood at the window. It was hard to keep inactive, with the moment of his meeting with the Countess so near. It was ridiculous that he should be nervous, he told himself, angrily.

He began to wish he had never consented to come here. Would she be very like Marguerite—poor Marguerite? He had heard the resemblance between the Woodville sisters was striking, but he had never seen Lillian.

"Yes. There are a few people coming to dinner this evening. It is beginning to snow. I was a wise prophet—see!"

She had pushed back the glowing curtains of plush and lace and was leaning forward looking out.

Sir Geoffrey Damyn bent his blonde head toward the pane. Against the sheet of plate glass the first great feathery flakes fluttered softly.

"Oh, Heaven!"

The lady of the Castle, entering, put her hand to her heart as though with a spasm of sudden pain.

The words were not audible; her lips had barely formed them.

She had nerved herself—yes, she had even drank half a glass of brandy to induce courage, composure.

But it was a shock all the same the sight of those two standing side by side in the bay window, the fair heads so close together. It was many a long day since she had fancied she loved him; but something very like jealousy, a hot, contracting, miserable pang, flashed through her.

Rub-a-dub-dub-dub!

There was the knocker; the Rector, probably. She must go; the meeting over at once.

She went on up the room. Iva heard the light step.

"Ah, here is mamma at last!" she cried.

"Sir Geoffrey Damyn, my mother, the Countess of Silverdale."

Resolutely he had turned his high-bred face to the slender little figure; now he looked at her.

"Marguerite!"

Such a wild, startled cry as it was.

He had fallen back a step and was staring at her. He was white as death. His up-flung hands were shaking.

But my lady, self-possessed to the very tips of her snowy, jewelled fingers, just bowed graciously and regarded her thunderstruck guest with eyes of calm and questioning surprise.

"You remark the resemblance, Sir Geoffrey, to my poor sister, whom I believe you knew. It is not the first time a stranger has been startled by our likeness. You are very welcome to the Castle. And now will you pardon me? Here are our other guests."

And with serene dignity she turned to greet those just entering with Harold.

Damyn's hands fell to his sides. He turned his pale face to Iva.

"I am afraid I have offended her ladyship, but the shock was overwhelming. I knew Marguerite Woodville; I could have sworn it was she who stood before me. Such a resemblance staggers comprehension!"

Iva drew a relieved breath. She had been vaguely dismayed by his outburst.

"They were wonderfully alike, everyone says. Ah, Mrs. Holdstrom! Did you bring the snow with you? I am glad to see you, Millie! Allow me to make known to you Sir Geoffrey Damyn."

And Sir Geoffrey Damyn, bowing low and uttering the light platitudes of society, felt that he had come face to face with a ghost this evening in the brilliant drawing-room of Silverdale Castle.

## CHAPTER XII.

"The little darling!" Iva cried.

She was down on her knees in the prim lodge kitchen, playing "peep" with the baby.

Between them there was the chintz-covered armchair, dear to the heart of Granny Morris.

When the wee yellow-haired laddie peered cautiously out on one side, and the girl flashed her lovely face on him from the other, what a merry, mingled shout went up to the brown rafters, where hung a goodly store of plump, reddish hams and "streaky" bacon.

It was the morning after the arrival of Sir Geoffrey Damyn—a most delightful morning, too—for

The snow had begun in the gloaming,

And busily all the night

Had been heaping field and highway

With a silence pure and white.

The fields, the dells, the curving avenues, all lay in the sparkling December sunshine, dazzling and fair to see.

The wide hedges were capped with pearl. Every twig on every tree was outlined as with a pencil of light; and the sky was blue as turquoise, and the air invigorating and sweet.

"Peep, Willie!"

"Peep!" echoed Willie, darting towards his comrade, and suddenly sitting down without the slightest intention of doing so.

Very bright the little kitchen looked, with its gay knitted mats on the white floor; its row of shining utensils reflecting the sunshine; its diamond-latticed window, across the lower part of which hung an immaculate Swiss curtain; its big blooming geranium and pot of gold-flowered musk on the wide ledge; its fire in the old-fashioned cavern of a fireplace, above which, from an iron crane, a tea-kettle hung; its rush-bottomed chairs; its dresser, with its even rows of blue plates and mugs. And old Granny Morris herself, sitting by the hearth, spectacled, white-capped, and white-aproned, her cat in her lap and her knitting-needles between her fingers, gave the last requisite touch to the quaint and homely picture.

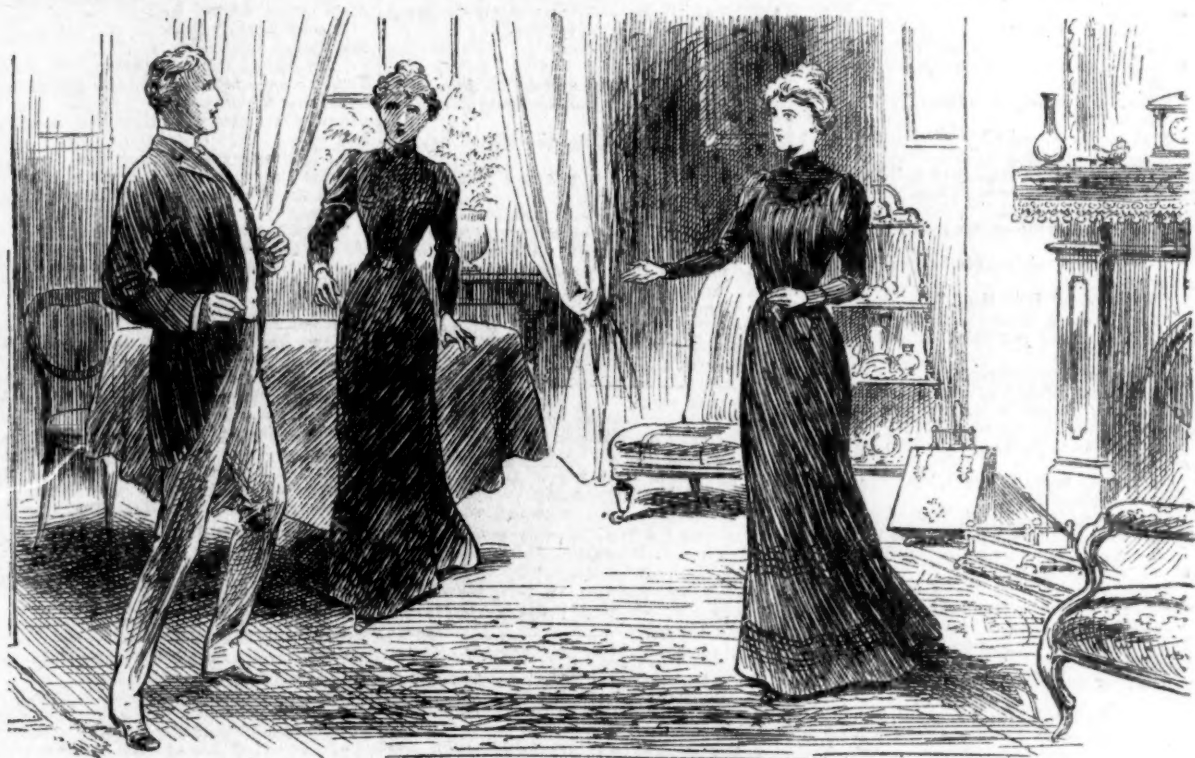
"Poor Willie!"

Lady Iva drew the little fellow to her, and kissed the lips which were beginning to quiver ominously at the corners.

And then, as consoled, he sat playing with her watch-chain, she looked up at Granny Morris with her pretty brows wrinkling in perplexity.

"Did you ever, granny—ever see anyone whom Willie looks like?"





IVA INTRODUCES SIR GEOFFREY DAMYN AND THE COUNTESS OF SILVERDALE.

The old woman gave her a quick glance over her glasses.

"Yes, dearie."

"When?"

"A good many years ago."

"Where?"

"Here."

"Here?"

"At Silverdale Castle—yes."

"Who was it?"

"A boy who was visiting there with his mother."

"What was his name?"

"Damyn."

"Geoffrey Damyn?"

"I believe so."

"Oh," the girl cried, laughing. "I was right, then! That is the resemblance I saw. But I was wondering if anyone else would notice it. It is very singular."

Mrs. Morris continued her keen scrutiny. But there was nothing in Lady Iva's face but pleasurable interest.

When one has made a discovery of any sort it is agreeable to have someone else approve the same.

"Well, I must be going."

Lady Iva stood up, lifting the little chap in her strong young arms.

"Good-bye, Willie!"

He put his "wet little, warm little mouth" down on hers as she held him laughingly above her.

A few minutes later, sealskin-capped and sacqued, she was out in the frosty sunshine, and walking briskly into town.

Mrs. Trendworth passed her, driving, and drew up to insist that she should ride with her. But Iva shook her head.

"Not such a lovely day. I would not give up my walk for anything."

She passed a few officers as she turned into the main street of Rothlyn.

They doffed their caps and looked after the erect young figure with a good deal of admiration.

Her shopping over, she came out of the town library. As she stepped across the threshold a gentleman, lounging a few feet away, promptly straightened up and joined her.

"Good morning, Lady Iva!"

He held out a shapely brown hand.

She nodded, smiled, and gave him her slim fingers for a moment.

"Good morning."

"I don't see your rig."

He was looking up and down the quiet street.

"I walked in."

"Really?"

"Truly."

"It is every foot of four miles."

"Doubtless. But that is no very appalling distance, you know."

"And are you going to walk back?"

She looked up mischievously.

"I cannot very well return otherwise."

He laughed. It seemed very easy to laugh just now. The world was a jolly place after all.

"My road is the same as yours," he averred.

"But you rode in. I see your horse."

"I must leave him to be shod," he declared, gravely; but his eyes were twinkling.

He called a boy, gave him a shilling to take the animal to the blacksmith's, and then turned to the Earl's daughter.

"Allow me," taking her book.

"But I did not say you might come with me."

She was looking very beautiful, very winsome, her soft cheeks carmined by her rapid walk, her shining eyes the deep, rich blue of "violets in shady spots."

"You could not be so cruel as to say I should not? It is not in your nature—such heartlessness."

"Is it not?" she queried, lightly. "Ah, you do not know me!"

But she was walking on beside him.

"Don't be too sure of that," in a voice that was earnest and thrilling.

Over the bridge spanning the narrow stream, out of the town they went.

The snow was deep for Sussex, but they were both good pedestrians.

"And how about the ball?" Lionel asked, breaking the rather embarrassing silence which had fallen upon them.

"I am going."

His handsome, dark face brightened wonderfully.

"That is good news. And will you, Lady Iva, save the first dance for me?"

She flashed him a smile.

"I will"—and then, when he would have broken out in expressions of gratitude—"I will—think about it."

"Lady Iva!"

"Mr. Lionel!"

"You can be cruel, after all."

The proud, crimson lips drooped like those of a sorrowful child.

"Why? Because I said I would think about it? Well, you are complimentary! Would you prefer I should refuse to consider it?"

The young fellow wheeled towards her protestingly.

"Now, you know I don't—couldn't mean that."

"How am I cruel, then?"

Oh, tormenting Lady Iva!

"In not saying yes at once!" he burst out. A smile came dimpling round the lovely mouth. It was sternly banished.

"You would not value such a promise. You would think it too lightly won."

"Not I," he insisted, strenuously. "Try me and see."

But very dubiously Lady Iva shook her head. She did not say a word.

For fully a hundred feet they walked on in silence. Then she looked up brightly at her escort.

"Sir Geoffrey Damyn arrived at the Castle last night."

"Did he?" sulkily.

Lady Iva turned away her face a moment. It was quite serious when she looked again at her companion.

"Yes. He is very handsome."

"Is he?"

Such a dismal voice!

"Very!" with emphasis.

And then, after a slight pause, "He, too, is going to the Bracebrough ball."

Lionel's eyes flashed.

"And you, I suppose, are reserving the first dance for him?"

Her innocent violent-black eyes were upraised to his.

"Why should I do that?"

"Oh, I don't know!" morosely, almost roughly, "unless you think it would anger me."

Lady Iva drew herself up.

"And what difference," she demanded, icily and quietly, "does it make to me whether you choose to be angered or not?"

He felt as if he had been drenched with cold water.

"Oh, not any, of course!" he avowed, dreadfully apologetic.

The remainder of their walk was rather dull. Now and then a smile came lurking in Iva's dimples, but Lionel, looking frowningly ahead, did not see it.

When they reached the entrance to the demesne she turned and held out her hand.

"Good-bye! What a charming walk we've had! Shant we see you at kettledrum?" she asked, cordially.

The poor fellow stared at her as he released her hand.

"I—I don't think so."

"Oh, yes, come if you can; and you can if you will. I want to talk about the ball. You ought to be interested in that, as I have promised to save the first and the last dance for you. Good-bye!"

### CHAPTER XIII.

Five hundred pounds! It rang in her ears like a knell—over and over. Five hundred pounds! And to-morrow would be Friday. To-morrow had she promised to meet him—to give him five hundred pounds! Three hundred, out of her own pin-money, had she on hand. But the other two?

There was music and singing and light talk going on in the cream and gold drawing-room, but a little apart from the others the Countess sat, her dark head bowed over the book of etchings on her lap.

Of course she could ask Harold for the sum. He would give it to her instantly and unquestioningly. But he might wonder for what purpose she required it, and she dreaded the birth of suspicion in his mind.

She must not fail to secure it. Not that Darcy could really injure her—the Countess of Silverdale was above all possible humiliation—but she dreaded that he would seek the Earl and insist on telling the story of her sister's shame. He was so intensely proud, he would feel it terribly. No, poor Marguerite's secret must be kept. But the extra two hundred pounds!

The Earl, talking with one of the Dallas girls across the room, and every now and then sending furtive glances in her direction, thought, as he caught a glimpse of her pale, weary face, that she did not look as happy as she used to a few short months ago.

Could it be that she thought he was failing in devotion, love?

As soon as he could in courtesy leave his companion, he crossed over to his wife.

She looked up at him with a faint smile.

"Dear heart, what a sad face!" he whispered. "I think you need brightening up. If you had more young people—merry people—around you all the time, you would feel better. You grieve too much for Marguerite."

She did not lift her dark-fringed lids.

Ah, yes, she did grieve for her! Was not the weight of Marguerite's woe always heavy on her heart? Poor Marguerite!

"Hush!" she murmured. "Listen—Iva is going to sing."

The Earl's heart warmed to his wife as he noted what a fond look she gave her step-daughter.

Iva, walking towards the piano, met the wistful glance.

"What shall it be, mamma?" she called, brightly.

No sickly sentimentalist was this daughter of Lord Silverdale—just a very lovely, very healthy, very happy girl! And so her cheeks were pink as apple-blossoms in May; her deep blue eyes full of brilliance; the smiles and dimples swift to come.

"Sing 'My love is like a red, red rose.'"

She sat down and struck the opening chords with a light and brilliant touch. And then her rich, sweet voice rose in the pretty old Scotch song.

And Lionel, bending over the rack and turning her music, thought that no rose which ever "sprang in June" was half as delicately glowing, as fair, as sweet, as this golden-haired girl in the dove-grey cashmere gown who sat and sang the charming ballad.

Here was the blush of early summer; here the perfume, the subtle, indescribable perfume of high birth and good breeding.

And deep in his heart, almost unconsciously, the young fellow echoed the tender, saucy words of the song:—

So fair art thou, my bonnie love,  
So deep in love am I,  
That I will love you still my dear,  
Till all the seas gang dry.

It was finished. There was a murmurous little storm of applause.

A few minutes later, Iva found herself near Sir Geoffrey Damyn. A certain warmth came into his languid gaze as their eyes met.

"Oh, to see or hear her singing, scarce I know which is divinest," he quoted in a low voice.

"Thank you!" she cried, as she passed on.

And Geoffrey Damyn turned his attention again to the Countess.

Whenever he could do so without being observed, without apparent rudeness, he watched her intently. The fascination her face held for him was extraordinary. He could not help looking at her. Involuntarily his glance sought her. That most marvellous resemblance! It seemed to increase, if possible, rather than diminish.

Marguerite's hair had been lighter than was that of the Earl's wife. She was gayer, merrier, too, more full of spirit and life; but the voice, the smile, the trick of attitude, these were identical.

The more he looked the more earnest grew his expression. His black eyes seemed striving to burn into her very soul.

In his absorption he did not perceive that Lord Silverdale, apparently chatting lightly with Nora Dallas, was, in reality, keenly observing him.

"Confound the fellow!" thought his lordship, savagely. "What does he mean by glaring so at Lilian? Is he falling in love with her? Beastly bad form, such a stare! If he were not my guest I'd feel tempted to give him a thrashing."

But, pshaw! Damyn was a gentleman. He had got into a reverie. His scrutiny was probably the blank gaze of far-off thoughts; and Lilian was remarkably pretty. He could not expect his friend would be blind to that fact.

But just as he had cheerfully accepted his own logic, he saw his wife, as though compelled to do so, slowly turn, lift her eyes and look full into those of Geoffrey Damyn lounging by the hearth. And he saw, too, the blood rush to her cheeks in a crimson flood, then fade away, leaving her white as ashes.

He compressed his lips till they showed just a livid line in his burnished beard. Why, in the name of Heaven, did his guest honour the Countess with such profound and piercing at-

tention? Why should she blush so burningly when her glance met his?

"And you really think we will have skating this winter, Lord Silverdale?"

"Skating? I beg your pardon, Miss Dallas. Yes. I should not be surprised to find the lake frozen over any morning."

But he was glad when they were all gone at last.

"Why are you taking that upstairs, Harold?" my lady asked, as he came out of the library with a little iron-clamped box in his hand.

"I don't care to leave it downstairs to-night. There are several hundred pounds in it, rent I received to-day. A couple of houses in Rothlyn have been entered lately, and I would rather not run any risks."

Several hundred pounds! And she wanted just two hundred pounds. It was within her reach—actually brought under her hand!

In her boudoir, the Earl went over to her rosewood writing desk, drew out a drawer, placed the case he carried therein, closed and locked the drawer.

The key he dropped in his pocket. Across the top of the book she had taken up the Countess watched his every movement.

He sank wearily into his chair. His fine face was perplexed and moody.

"Tired, darling?"

She had laid down her book, crossed over to him, slipped her arm around his neck. The dear, loving voice, the clinging touch.

He brightened, smiled affectionately, and drew her lips down to his.

"Yes, and a small bit cranky," he confessed, laughing.

And then he went to bed and to sleep.

But with busily whirling brain the Countess of Silverdale lay and stared at the taper burning in a bowl of crimson glass on the console.

The bedroom was divided by an arch from the boudoir. Between the two hung heavy Oriental portières, which at night were pushed back on their brazen rod, so that the two made really one long room.

Directly opposite this arch an immense gold-framed mirror covered the wall from floor to ceiling.

How long Harold had slept he himself could not have told; but when he opened his eyes, he missed his wife from his side.

Ten minutes passed.

Still heavy with sleep, though his eyes were open, he lay motionless.

Was that a door jarring?

He moved a little.

Through the arch a soft light streamed. He could not see into the other apartment. Daily his gaze sought the great mirror. He stared therein stupidly, sleepily.

His wife, a wrapper flung over her nightgown, barefooted, a lamp in her hand, had come into the boudoir from the hall.

Some one had been taken ill, probably, and she had been called. But why was she standing so still, her head bent forward, as though listening?

There was no sound.

She laid her lamp down on a table, turned to her escritoire, applied something she held in her hand to the drawer.

A key—he heard it creak in the lock.

Between the dull glow of the taper on the very low console of the mirror and the brightness in the adjoining room, he could see quite well in the great glass.

She drew out the drawer, took therefrom his square cash-box, turned in it the tiny key he had neglected to remove, threw back the lid.

The mild surprise of the watcher became intensified into curiosity.

What in the wide world did Lilian want rummaging among his notes and bills at this hour of the night? It must be long after midnight!

He sat bolt upright in bed. He saw her rise and, with something in her hand, cross the room.



For an instant she passed out of his line of vision.

He was about to call, when she came back empty-handed.

As before, she stood stock still a moment, as though listening.

Then softly and deliberately she turned the iron-clamped box upside down, strewing its contents in confusion on the floor.

Good heavens! was she going mad? What else could such queer conduct mean?

The sweat started out on the Earl's brow.

There was such a catlike stealthiness of movement about her, such furtiveness of action, it mystified, terrified him.

Hush! he sank back.

She was coming in. With a last cautious look of secrecy around she had taken up her lamp.

Leaving the papers and money lying in the disorder in which she had strewn them, she came towards the half-curtained arch.

Impelled by excitement, the Earl rose to a sitting posture.

How quietly she moved! Her bare feet sank in the soft carpet.

With one hand she pushed the portière still further aside. Holding the lamp in the other, she came gliding in.

The light fell on her dainty face, on her loose, fur-bordered negligé, on the snowy laces and embroideries of her "robe de nuit," which puffed from the unbuttoned wrapper.

He did not for a second remove his eyes from the great mirror, though, now that she was in the room, he might have looked at her rather than her reflection.

But her actions had been so uncanny, so cunning, so inexplicable, he felt fairly frozen—incapable of as much as turning his head.

Two! It boomed solemnly from the clock above the stables.

Still holding the lamp, she advanced.

Immediately before her was the mirror, and in it—

Her heart ceased beating.

From the polished surface, directly at her looked the pallid face, the wild, wide eyes of the Earl of Silverdale!

Detected!

She did not drop the lamp. Indeed, her slim fingers only closed more fiercely around it.

She had not been sufficiently cautious. She had supposed he would sleep soundly till morning, as he usually did.

And now he had seen all—all! She knew that by his dismayed and marvelling expression. How could she explain? What could she say?

She betrayed no emotion. She was too stunned for that. Still, as if carved from stone, she stood, scarcely breathing.

"Lilian!"

And even as he spoke a scheme, a device, flashed lightning-like to her brain. Steadily she moved forward—steadily and silently.

"Lilian!" he called hoarsely, again.

But still she did not answer. With the same measured, noiseless step she passed just below the bed over to the mantel. There she deposited her lamp.

"Good heaven!" the Earl groaned. "Or of the other of us is mad!"

She turned slowly—came towards the bed. Her face was set, her eyes open, vacant, unseeing.

And now she was beside him.

He put out his hand, touched her lightly.

Blankly and blindly she looked beyond him.

"Heaven!" he muttered. "She is asleep!"

She heard. Oh! her heart was beating fast enough now—fast and exultantly! That was her scheme. It had worked. That her plan. It had succeeded.

She had feigned somnambulism.

She began to remove her wrapper.

The Earl lay gently back on his pillow. He must not awaken her. He had heard of serious effects to a sleep-walker from being too suddenly aroused.

Ten minutes more and she lay, the white lids drooped, the sweet breath coming full and even, wrapped in a fair and peaceful slumber.

Little Lilian—his poor, dear little Lilian! And what wild, horrible doubts about her had been unnerving, haunting him!

It was foolish of him to have told her there were burglars in Rothlyn. The idea had doubtless frightened her. She had slept awhile, dreamed of intruders, and had risen in her sleep to act their part.

The winter dawn was grey and dreary in the east when he rose, dressed quietly, went into the boudoir, collected his scattered papers, found his memorandum, counted his money.

The total was incorrect. He referred to his list of receipts—counted again. Two hundred pounds were missing.

She had crossed the room, he remembered now, with something in her hand.

Where had she secreted it?

He was about to make search for it when a low knock came to the door.

He instantly opened it. The servant looked rather astonished at seeing his master up and dressed so early.

"Please, your lordship, we found the library window, shutters and all, wide open this morning. And Thomas says he fastened everyone last night. We are afraid it may be thieves got in, seeing as they are in the neighbourhood."

"Oh, nonsense!" ejaculated the Earl, abruptly. "Don't be alarmed at your shadow. Someone doubtless opened the casement after Thomas closed it, that is all. Someone in the house."

But as he spoke he comprehended the circumstances which had scared the servants.

In her excited and irresponsible condition, Lilian had gone down and opened the window, full of some vague consciousness that thus it was burglars entered. Then she had returned and emptied his cash-box on the floor, and then had gone back to bed and fallen asleep sweetly as a child.

Somnambulists perpetrated fantastic tricks occasionally. Half-a-dozen he had heard come into his head.

But that two hundred pounds! Where had she put it? They would probably discover by chance. Of course she could not remember.

"Harold!"

"Yes, love."

She was up and dressed, coming through the parted portières.

"How early we both are up! I was restless and could sleep no longer. Yet I feel so tired, too."

She passed her hand over her eyes. She was looking wan and weary. She shivered in her warm wrapper of white merino and swans-down.

"Shall I tell you why, Lilian?" he asked, tenderly.

"Why?"

And she looked up at him with the innocent questioning of a baby.

"You feel exhausted because—don't be frightened, dear—because, instead of resting all these hours, you've been roaming over the house."

"I, Harold?"

Her amazement was boundless.

"Yes. You walked in your sleep last night."

"Oh, Harold!"

"You did, dear. When you returned to bed I spoke to you, touched you, but you only looked straight ahead. Your face was fixed, your eyes were unseeing."

"Oh, Harold!" she gasped again.

He stooped and kissed her.

"There is nothing to look so frightened about, little one," he said, kindly.

And he made up his mind he would say no word to her about the missing two hundred pounds. It would only distress, annoy her. He would not cause her mortification for thrice the sum.

"And now we will go down for a cup of coffee. I have to ride into Rothlyn early."

She understood his silence.

How gentle and generous and noble he was! how worthy of the best woman God ever made! And she was his companion. He who was all that was high-minded, high-hearted, honourable—he under the ancestral roof which sheltered his young daughter, lived with her, a woman he had never wedded, and—oh, the strange, shameful deception of it all—he knew it not!

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Friday!

The short winter afternoon was almost gone. In the west a few bars of orange and dull red streaked the chill, grey sky.

Seated in her favourite sleepy-hollow chair by her boudoir fire, the Countess of Silverdale bound a handkerchief around her brows, took up her vinaigrette, rang the bell by the mantel, and then sank back in her chair, her countenance assuming an expression of physical distress.

"Jane!"

"Yes, my lady."

"If anyone asks for me, say I am feeling too ill to see them—that I have a wretched headache. I make no exceptions. I cannot possibly be present at dinner this evening unless I can secure a few hours' rest now."

"Yes, your ladyship."

And Jane left her.

Hardly was she gone when the Countess leaped up, tore the handkerchief from her forehead, flung aside her vinaigrette and passed into the next room, whence she emerged a few minutes later, clad in dark, tight-fitting walking-costume from top to toe.

She counted over the roll of notes she held, then secreted them in the breast pocket of her coat.

She went to the window.

Was it dark enough?

Yes, she might risk it now.

He had not said the hour he would be there, but most likely about the same time as before. He would be "skulking around," as he had said himself.

She was all impatience to be off. If it were only over!

The possession of the money, when she recalled how she had secured some of it, seemed actually to irritate, gall her.

She wanted to get rid of it—to have the distasteful, necessary meeting a thing of the past. This was the last time, please goodness, she would ever see his hateful face!

Egypt, he had said. Egypt was a long way off!

Yes, the last glimmer of daylight was gone. No one would see her now; or, seeing, they would not recognise her.

She went out on the small side balcony, as she had gone the night she ran down to see the baby at the Lodge. But now, instead of hurrying down the main avenue, she made a detour and came out almost at the spot where she before had met him.

There he was, walking up and down under a leafless tree, a pipe—her pretty nose curled at the scent of the vile tobacco—a pipe in his mouth, his cap drawn low, his hands in his pockets.

Light as was her footfall, it sounded distinct on the frozen snow.

He wheeled round. She went directly up to him.

"Here!"

She had thrust her gloved hand in her bosom, and was holding him out the package. He took it with a chuckle.

"All right, I suppose?" fingering it.

She declined no reply.

"Well, you've stuck to your word, my lady," and now he touched his cap. "I'll stick to mine."

If he only would! Surely the worst was over now. She had no more to fear.

They turned immediately in different directions.

As she emerged on the broad, main avenue, she almost ran into Sir Geoffrey Damyn.

"I beg your pardon!"

He recognised her voice, and quickly lifted his hat.

"Alone, Lady Silverdale?" He gave a rapid glance around for a possible escort. "Are you not afraid to be out when it is so dark and late?"

She accepted his proffered arm.

"I?" laughing. "Oh, no! I am never afraid!"

There was something more than merry bravado in the musical voice. There was defiance.

At the Castle steps she paused, and shook her head.

"Go in," she said; "and don't mention our meeting."

Puzzled, but obedient, he entered the hall.

Standing at the window above, through the oppressively quiet, extremely clear night air, the Earl heard the injunction, "Don't mention our meeting!"

To whom had she said that? It certainly was Lillian's voice. Why had she said it?

And just then she burst in through the long French window.

The room was brightly lighted. She took one backward step, then came in, closing the casement.

Her husband confronted her!

"Where have you been, Lillian?" demanded the Earl, rather sternly.

A certain petulance swept over her.

This was the second time lately he had met her with the same question.

"For a walk," coldly.

"With whom?"

"Alone."

There was gravity, if not sternness, in his regard.

"Jane told me you were quite ill with the headache, and must not be disturbed."

She was angry with herself for having resented his first inquiry. She might have remembered he never was unjust.

She was worn out from the exciting events of the previous night—from her dread all day of her appointed interview.

So, feeling driven and confused, she faced him, and said the very last thing she felt she should say,—

"Then why did you intrude?"

"Intrude, Lillian?"

She was getting deeper in the mire. Why was she so "contrary"? Never had she loved him more dearly.

"Yes."

Just the one icy word.

He drew himself up to his fine height.

"I came in sympathy, Lillian," with sad dignity. "You were not here. I supposed you had gone out to try if the air would serve your head. I was listening for you at the window, when I heard you speak to—whom?"

She had quite forgotten her words. Her only reason for cautioning silence had been that her guests might doubt her headache, after learning she had been out.

So she answered, frankly enough,

"Sir Geoffrey Damyn."

His eyes flashed, but he said no word.

Ah, Sir Geoffrey Damyn! And he was not to mention their meeting!

He bowed gravely.

"I shall leave you to dress," he said.

He had reached the door.

She ran after him.

"Harold," she cried, impulsively, "you are not angry with me?"

Very lightly his "lips of bearded bloom" brushed those she coaxingly lifted.

"Of course not."

But the seed of suspicion was sown!

"By Jupiter!" muttered Geoffrey Damyn.

He had seen many fair women in his day, this blasé young man, but never one as imperially beautiful as the girl who came down the great black staircase of Castle Silverdale the night of the Braceborough ball.

Quite a little crowd had assembled. They would leave together from here.

The huge hall was brilliantly lighted. The sea-coal fire was big enough and hot enough to roast an ox.

The group, in festal attire, gave to the cathedral-like place a warmth, a glow, a life which was altogether charming.

Like loyal guards awaiting their queen seemed the two mailed figures of bronze which, at either side of the base of the grand stairway, down which Lady Iva came, held aloft cups of crimson flame.

Her first ball! So she was all in white—the airiest, cloudiest of tulle. The fair arms and bosom were bare, but long gloves wrinkled over the elbows of the former—some filmy stuff modestly veiled, while it only half hid, the latter.

A spray of ivy leaves partly circled "the massive cable of twisted gold" which crowned her pretty, high-held head. Round her throat was a string of pearls which had been her mother's. Jewels that were fit for a princess royal—purely luminous as prisoned moonlight.

And the face, with all a girl's delight in her first ball, shyness, because of her first full dress, looking gladly and blushing from it—how lovely it was! how winsome!—perhaps more than either, how lovable!

The delicate features, the cheeks of soft rose velvet, the brilliant, dark-lashed, violet-black eyes, the proud, smiling lips, the gleaming teeth, the pretty, serene yet girlish air.

No wonder Geoffrey Damyn said "By Jupiter!" under his breath; no wonder Lance Carlyn looked at her with a world of adoration in his bold brown eyes; or that the Earl of Silverdale realised, as he had never quite done before, what a handsome daughter he possessed.

"Behold the belle of the ball!" cried Colonel Harrington, with an elaborate bow.

A snowy-moustached, scarlet-coated, gold-laced old warrior, he happened at present to be stationed at Rothlyn, to the great delight of his sister, Mrs. Trendworth.

"Ah, poor me!" sighed that lady, who, in fawn brocade and rubies, looked ten years younger than the age which she could honestly claim. "Poor me! I shall be besieged."

For she it was who had promptly agreed to chaperone the Earl's daughter.

"She will not leave them heart-whole long," quoted Lord Rossiter, smilingly.

"Ah, who has she left heart-whole now?" queried Jimmie Talbot, tragically.

She stood blushing and laughing while the hurricane of raillery blew merrily around her.

"Not you, Jimmie, I know."

"Faith, it's a true word you speak!" acknowledged Jimmie.

The tone, the words, were those of an Irish visitor at the Trendworths, a witty and gallant old gentleman.

When the laughter was over they donned wraps and prepared to leave.

Languid, cynical, handsome, Sir Geoffrey Damyn rose, and looked in Iva's direction.

But young Carlyn was wiser. His eyes sent a swift petition to Mrs. Trendworth.

"The Colonel, Iva, and I will drive together," called her jolly voice. "We have room for just one more. Mr. Carlyn, I choose you."

She had liked him since he was a boy in knickerbockers. He was always so brave, so chivalrous, so full of rattling good spirits which were not a form of dare-devilism.

She felt fully repaid by the smile of gratitude he flashed her.

Geoffrey Damyn silently fell back.

"Good-bye, little mamma!"

And Iva bent to give her a loving kiss.

"Enjoy yourself, dear."

"I couldn't help it—not if I wanted to," she laughed. "How I wish you were coming!"

Then the doors clanked open, and with jest and laughter they passed out into the waiting carriages and were driven away.

A most aristocratic club, this Braceborough. An invitation to its annual ball argued the recipient socially irreproachable. And for the

present occasion the members having the affair in charge seemed to have surpassed themselves.

Everywhere were holly and mistletoe—everywhere flags and flowers and lights.

The cream of the county gathered there. Officers from Rothlyn lent colour to the scene. A famous London editor, a French dramatist, an American senator, brought their individual prestige to distinguish the event.

And, as Colonel Harrington had predicted, the beauty and belle of the night, the most admired, surrounded, sought, was the lovely young daughter of the Earl of Silverdale.

Carlyn was in Paradise. She had given him the first dance, a smile and a rose.

But the second and fifth she danced with Geoffrey Damyn. And, unless when he waltzed with her, that gentleman took no part in the festivity.

He leaned against one of the entrance pillars, and watched her while she floated through the lancers with Jimmie Talbot.

What a picture she was, to be sure! how stately for all her lissome girlishness! And how well—how exceedingly well—she would look at his—Sir Geoffrey Damyn's—table!

That was the conjecture which absorbed him, which made him stand so long watching her through his half-shut eyes.

Love her?

Something between a moan and a sigh escaped him.

Not as he had loved Marguerite in that bright, brief, fairy summer—not like that. But he must not let that wretched affair spoil his whole life. He must take possession of the estates which had accrued to him with his title, do his duty to his tenants, instal a wife at picturesque old Sunnyside.

And where could he find one as noble and as fair as Lady Iva Silverdale?

But could she care at all for him?

Ah, that was uncertain!

Living in the same house with her, as he had been for the last couple of weeks, he had found it simply impossible to break down the barriers of mere bright and barren acquaintanceship.

"It is deucedly hard," the young Baronet decided, "that I should be compelled to attempt my wooing under eyes which are the counterpart of others I have loved. Confound it all! I remember that Marguerite is dead. I come into a room and she—or one sufficiently like her to be her other self—sits before me. And with the shock—for it is always a shock—I fancy she is not dead and buried after all. It's a confoundingly embarrassing position for a fellow to find himself in! Embarrassing! Worse than that. It is most infernally uncomfortable!"

The hours took wings and vanished—literally danced away.

Vainly had Carlyn pleaded for another dance.

"You are to have the last, you know," Iva said.

"Yes; but that will only make two. You have given Damyn as many as that."

"Well," quietly, "why should I not?"

A poser that!

He was glad no answer was necessary, for just then her partner claimed her.

The night was nearly over, the crowd already thinning.

Soon would the Braceborough ball, with its music, its fleeting feet, its heartburnings and its triumphs, be but a brilliant memory.

Soft and slow uprose, outswelled and sank to softly rise again, the music of the last waltz.

"Now!" Lance Carlyn said.

The moment of his bliss had come.

Up and down, now here, then there, in perfect time, perfect tune, they swayed and drifted.

"Iva!"

His dark head was bowed till his lips almost touched her hair.

He felt her start. But she did not speak.

He was a bold wooer. He was not easily dismayed.



He spoke again.  
 "Iva, love!"  
 "Mr. Carlyn!"  
 Low and sweet the music pulsed.  
 "Why should I not say it?" he murmured, fervently. "You are my love—first, last, for ever! Nothing on earth can alter that—nothing in Heaven!"

Oh, the lilting, dreamful music! The fierce tenderness of his words, their young passion thrilled her.

The pale-rose on her cheek deepened to carnation. But her lips faltered.

"I'm not worthy of you, Iva," as they circled smoothly on. "But what fellow is? And I'm not going to lose the white rose above my head because it is too exquisite for me. Have I any chance, sweetheart—any chance at all?"

She did love him—how deeply her own child-heart knew not yet. She was so young, and he might not care for her so much if she were to let him know.

The waltz was almost done. The last bars quivered softly through the room. And she did not want to be engaged to anyone just yet. But she must not answer no!

She lifted to his her flower-sweet face. Her eyes were laughing, but tender, too.

"Perhaps a very tiny little chance!" she said, in a voice of love and coquetry and mischief blended.

His brown eyes kindled.

"It is worth the wide world to me!" he whispered.

The melody died away.

They stood still.

"Hurry, Iva!" cried Mrs. Trendworth, hastening up. "The carriage is waiting. Why, you look as fresh as when we came! Gracious, what pink cheeks! Lance, you audacious boy, whatever have you been saying to her?"

The audacious boy bowed low.

"I've been telling her," he responded, gravely, "that if there is anything which makes the thought of the coming Christmas dear to my heart—if there is anything which makes life something greater and higher than mere existence—if there is anything the blessed season holds for me delightful beyond expression—it is the prospect of unlimited roast turkey and plum pudding!"

(To be continued next week.)

(This story commenced in No. 2061. Back numbers can be obtained through all News-agents.)

### WHEN THE COLD DAYS COME

When the cold days come and the heart is chilled of cold,

What then are all the joys of life the arms of us can hold?

When the grey in autumn woodlands veils the beauty of the gold—

When the cold, when the cold days come!

When the cold days come and earth's voices are a moan,

And the heart shrinks in the silence and hears no loving tone,

Life must weep above the ashes of the joys that life has known,

When the cold, when the cold days come!

When the cold days come and the world has colder grown,

Let us think then of the springtime when the blossoms bright were blown;

Let us say: "One heart then loved us, though we shiver now alone!"

When the cold, when the cold days come!

EVERY year strips us of at least one vain expectation, and teaches us to reckon some good lost in its stead.

Don't dose your little ones with senna tea and castor oil on the smallest pretext, but give them each a baked apple or a few stewed prunes on going to bed, and an orange on waking in the morning; then you will find aperient drugs are very rarely wanted.

## Gems

It is the law of good economy to make the best of everything.

SOME people make light of their troubles by burning their bridges behind them.

A HEALTHY man is the complement of the seasons, and in winter summer is in his heart.

MANY men consent to be shut out of heaven that they may stand in with the world.

WEEDS thrive best in richest soil. This applies to Churches as well as to fields and gardens.

WHAT men want is—not talent, but purpose: not the power to achieve, but the will to labour.

Is not every able editor a ruler of the world, being a persuader of it? though self-elected, yet sanctioned by the sale of numbers?

No man has come to true greatness who has not felt, in some degree, that his life belongs to his race, and that what God gives him is given for mankind.

ALTERNATE rest and action is the law of the mind, as it is of the body, and he who can discover the true proportions of each and preserve them in steadfast operation has learned one of the most valuable secrets of his own nature.

**TELLTALE ENVELOPES.**—An envelope has been designed that mail thieves cannot tamper with undetected. There are two ways in which ordinary envelopes may be opened—one by forcing the flap open with a thin metal blade, and the other by steaming the envelope until the mucilage no longer holds the flap. In either case it is difficult for even the person to whom the letter is addressed to ascertain whether the envelope has been opened unless something has been extracted. The improved envelope differs from the ordinary kind only in having a sheet of tissue paper attached to the flap and extending down inside the pocket. This sheet attaches itself to the surface of the envelope with the sealing of the letter, and it is obvious that any attempt to force the flap would tear the tissue, in spite of the utmost caution, the torn tissue being plainly seen when the envelope was opened in the proper way. To detect any subjection to the steaming process the tissue is secured to the flap by a coloured mucilage, which liquifies instantly when brought into the presence of the hot steam, daubing the inner and outer surface of the letter until it plainly indicates the use of improper methods to ascertain the contents.

**"RAIN SHIELDS."**—In some form or other the umbrella was in use many centuries before the Christian Era. We see it depicted in the paintings and sculptures of Egypt. In China and Japan the umbrella has been in existence as far back as history can trace, and the full war attire of a Japanese soldier included not only a fan, but a very large parasol. At the beginning of the seventeenth century umbrellas were introduced into England as a fashionable fad. In those days they were made of feathers in imitation of the plumage of water birds. Later, oiled silk became the ordinary material. In the reign of Queen Anne, as a protection in wet weather, they became of general use amongst women. That the stronger sex disdained them, although men's dress was just as gay and rich as that of ladies, is proved beyond a doubt by many writers of the period.

"Let Paris dames the umbrella's ribs display To guard their beauties from the sunny ray; Or sweating slaves support the shady load, When Eastern monarchs show their state abroad;

Britain in winter only knows its aid, To guard from chilly showers the walking maid."

## Constipation—Woman's Greatest Enemy

Permanently Cured by Bile Beans

A Grateful Woman's Testimony

Biliousness, Loss of Appetite and Piles also Ended

That celebrated physician, the late Sir Andrew Clark, expressed the firm opinion that constipation was the cause of one half of the ailments from which women and girls suffer. It fills the blood with impurities, robs the system of energy, causes piles, headache, biliousness, skin eruptions, and a host of other disorders. For these disorders and for their root cause (constipation) Chas. Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness are unequalled.

Mrs. S. Williams, of Longhope, Gloucester, has proved this. "For fully twenty years," she said to a "Dean Forest Mercury" reporter, "I was a martyr to constipation. It brought on piles and biliousness, robbed me of appetite and energy, and made my life a burden to me. Many a weary day have I spent weighed down with a feeling of utter wretchedness and not caring whether I lived or died. Doctors?



Yes, I tried several, but no amount of doctoring seemed capable of affording me the slightest relief; and by degrees I grew weaker and more despondent.

"A few months ago I saw some striking testimony in a Birmingham paper to the success of Chas. Forde's Bile Beans in cases of piles and constipation. So I determined to give them a fair trial. Soon after beginning the course I felt a change. I became brighter, and as I persevered with the Beans the distressing symptoms from which I had suffered so long began to leave me. My appetite improved, and my bowels were corrected and strengthened. I ceased to be troubled with constipation, and what I ate no longer made me bilious. The erysipelas, too, disappeared completely, and I have had no further trouble from that complaint. Now, after a thorough course of the Beans, I feel stronger, more vigorous, and in better health generally than I have felt for many years. Thanks alone to Chas. Forde's Bile Beans, life for me has once more been made worth living."

Chas. Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness are unequalled for constipation, piles, bilious attacks, and all disorders arising from impaired digestion and defective bile flow, nervousness, dizziness, palpitation, pimples, skin eruptions, liver and kidney ailments, backache, chest pains, anaemia, colds, chills, influenza, rheumatism, and all female ailments. Sold by all chemists, or post free, from the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., 119 and 120, London Wall, London, E.C., for price 1s. 1½d. or 2s. 9d. (2s. 9d. box contains three times 1s. 1½d. box.) Bile Beans are sold only in sealed boxes; never loose.

A wee girl was asked by a lady how many brothers she had. "Only John," was the quiet response, "an' he ain't my brother. But he's just as nice, though," added the child, naively.

# ROSALIND'S VOW

## CHAPTER XL.

Out of an instinctive delicacy, that much buffeting with the world and its evil ways had been powerless to eradicate, Diana Blackmore retired from the room when she found that the interview between husband and wife promised to be one at which no third person should assist. Besides this, she had her own affairs to attend to, and she desired to lose no time in beginning to pack, for she had made up her mind not to remain at the lodge an hour longer than was necessary, now that Vansittart had so clearly intimated his desire to be rid of her.

Accordingly she went to her own room, and was there when the sound of falling glass attracted her attention. In a moment she had blown out her candle, and advanced with noiseless footsteps into the hall, and it was then that she heard a man's voice, and recognised it at once as Vansittart's.

Her surprise—for she had supposed him to be rendered virtually helpless, at least for a few days—did not deprive her of self-possession.

She ran swiftly upstairs, and into the room where Rosalind was slowly drawing on her cloak, while Sir Kenneth leant against the mantelpiece, his eyes fixed gloomily on the ground. He looked up as Diana came in, and was a little startled at the alarm painted on her face.

"Vansittart is here," she breathed, quickly, "and his accomplice, Gaston, is with him."

"Well?" demanded Sir Kenneth, "what of that?"

"Only that you are in peril, and I wish to put you on your guard. Vansittart will not stick at a trifle, as you may or may not be aware, and the blow you struck him he is not likely to forget. Are you armed?"

"Armed?"

"Yes!" impatiently. "Have you a revolver, or weapon of any kind?"

"Certainly not," answered the Baronet, promptly, and with a contemptuous laugh.

"But for all that I am not afraid of Pierce Vansittart."

"Recollect it will be two to one."

"I am quite ready to face the odds. Besides, I think you are alarming yourself unnecessarily. Vansittart will not put himself in peril for the sake of wreaking a private spite."

Diana shrugged her shoulders hopelessly.

"You don't know him, or you would not say that. As a rule, he is prudent enough, but when his blood is up he becomes reckless. For heaven's sake come to terms with him, if possible."

The words were hardly out of her mouth when Vansittart pushed open the door, and stood for a moment on the threshold, almost stupefied by astonishment at the sight of the persons within—Diana, whom he imagined to be at York—Sir Kenneth, who was the last man in the world he was prepared to meet!

The Baronet looked at him with measureless scorn, and after a moment spoke.

"You are surprised to see me here, Mr. Pierce Vansittart? You thought you had laid your plans too well for the possibility of their miscarrying. Man—man!"—the Baronet's voice became deep and solemn—"did it never enter into your calculations that there is an all-seeing Providence above, whose mission it is to protect the innocent from the snares of the wicked? Did you think that you could defy God and man alike with impunity?"

The sound of his voice seemed to break the spell that had fallen upon Vansittart, and he advanced farther into the room, Gaston following, and looking with undisguised curiosity from one to the other of the trio.

"I am surprised to see you under my roof!" declared Vansittart, with unblushing effrontery, "and I cannot pretend to give you a welcome either. In point of fact, I must request you to leave this house with as little delay as possible."

"You need not impress that upon me. My desire to leave is to the full as great as yours to be rid of me. Come, Rosalind, turning to his wife, "are you ready?"

"Quite," she said, shrinking timidly to his side.

"Stay a moment!" cried Vansittart, the evil glitter that Rosalind had learned to know coming in his eyes. "I said I desired your absence, Sir Kenneth, but this lady will not accompany you."

"This lady is my wife," returned the Baronet, with contemptuous hauteur, "and she will leave this house under my protection."

"You have suddenly awakened to your rights as a husband," was the sneering remark. "You waited until you saw them menaced before you thought well to assert them!"

"I owe no explanation to you, Pierce Vansittart, but, all the same, I take this opportunity of telling you that your vile insinuations have carried no more weight with them than chaff before the wind. More than that, if you think the insults you have offered Lady Hawtrey will pass unavenged, you are woefully mistaken. You shall answer to the laws of your country for your unparalleled villainy."

Sir Kenneth's eyes flashed as he said this, and, almost unconsciously, he held out his arm, through which Rosalind slipped her own. She knew he would have done as much for any woman who needed his protection as he was now doing for her; and yet, in spite of this knowledge, her heart thrilled at the mere sense of his presence. And as she looked into his face, and at his tall, stalwart form, she wondered whether the world held such another perfect man!

Vansittart laughed scornfully. Knowing that this time to-morrow he should be well out of England, Sir Kenneth's threats did not trouble him in the smallest possible degree.

"Very well," he said, "do your worst, and let all the world know how you and your wife parted on your wedding-day. It will not affect me, although it will hardly be pleasant for you. Very few people's lives will bear the strong light of a law-court, and it is not likely yours is any exception to the rule."

"You judge Sir Kenneth by yourself," said Diana Blackmore, speaking now, for the first time, in deliberate accents. "There are reasons why you should dread trial in a court of law, because the end of it would be—the scaffold!"

He turned upon her savagely, his face blanched to an awful whiteness. The housekeeper had counselled prudence to Sir Kenneth, which she herself had been unable to follow. Her anger and rage with Vansittart culminated when he announced his intention of not letting Rosalind go, and hurried her into a declaration that she had not intended making until to-morrow.

"Hold your tongue, will you!" he exclaimed.

"No, for the time has come when I shall speak. Hear me, Sir Kenneth—hear me, Lady Hawtrey," she exclaimed with growing excitement, while her voice rang out loud and clear. "I denounce this man as a murderer—the murderer of his wife's nephew, Willie Noel!"

"It is a lie!" came from Vansittart's white lips, while the others drew back with a simultaneous exclamation of horror.

"It is the truth, and I will prove it!"

"And get hanged for your pains!" he hissed.

"No, I have turned Queen's evidence, and shall have a free pardon, or if I do not I don't much care, for"—her voice grew fierce as she addressed him—"a few years' imprisonment will be of small account compared with my delight at revenging myself on you!"

This was a blow for which Vansittart had not bargained. Most solemnly had this woman sworn never to betray him, and he had imagined that fears for her own safety would be all powerful in making her keep her oath. But he had not made allowance for one important element in her nature. He forgot that—

"Heaven holds no rage like love to hatred turned,

And hell no fury like a woman scorned!"

After this avowal he felt it would be absurd to persevere with his purpose of forcing Rosalind to accompany him to America, for what would there be to prevent her denouncing him, now that he had heard the housekeeper's accusation?

"Come, Gaston," he said, turning to his companion, with a forced laugh, "We must acknowledge ourselves beaten, and we will leave Lady Hawtrey to make up her differences with her husband, and Mrs. Blackmore in possession of the lodge. There is no object in our remaining now."

"On the contrary," said Sir Kenneth, in a very determined voice, as he shook his arm free from Rosalind, and came forward. "You will remain here until this accusation of your housekeeper has been thoroughly investigated. Your wife is now suffering under the suspicion of having murdered her nephew, and it is my duty, as a magistrate holding the Queen's commission, to see that the guilty person should be brought to justice, and the innocent cleared of a groundless suspicion. You will, therefore, consider yourself under arrest, and I call upon your companion, whoever he may be, to help me in enforcing my words."

Vansittart glared round like a wild beast brought to bay. He was fully aware that Gaston had shrunk from his side; and the movement, as well as the man's face, warned him he could not count on assistance from that quarter.

Gaston was quite ready to help so long as he ran no particular peril himself, but when it came to a question of aiding a murderer to escape he drew back, with a very natural consideration for his own safety.

That Sir Kenneth had every intention of detaining him as prisoner Vansittart had no doubt. His one hope was, therefore, to escape, and get on board his yacht. Once there he would have a good start of his pursuers, and might succeed in getting away. It was his only chance.

In a moment he had drawn from an inner breast-pocket a revolver that glittered like silver in the light of the lamp. He pointed it full at Sir Kenneth—pulled the trigger, and fired!

A woman's shriek rang out, wild and piercing; and when the smoke cleared away Rosalind was clinging round her husband's neck, the blood flowing copiously from a wound in her breast.

On seeing Vansittart aim the pistol she had flung herself across Kenneth's body, determined to give her life for his!

## CHAPTER XLI.

Sir Kenneth's horror, as he held his wife's apparently lifeless body in his, and saw the blood trickling down her dress, may be imagined better than described. Heedless of everything else in the excitement and agony of the moment, he laid her down on a couch, and, falling on his knees beside her, implored her to speak to him, while he pressed between his own one heavy hand, and carried it protectingly to his lips.

In that supreme moment he forgot the gulf lying between them, and only remembered that this was the woman whom he had loved, and who was bound to him by the



closest tie humanity knows. Moreover, it was to save his life that she had sacrificed her own.

In the excitement, Vansittart and Gaston left the room, and Diana hurried forward, and at once cut away the blood-soaked clothing from the wounded girl, and laid bare the wound—which proved to be in the left shoulder.

"Go away," she said to Sir Kenneth. "I have been a nurse, and if you will let me come I will staunch the blood. If you have a linen handkerchief tear it up into strips, and make me a bandage."

Half dazed, he obeyed, and she took his place; and soon, by dint of her exertions, the blood ceased flowing, and Rosalind opened her eyes.

"Kenneth!" she exclaimed, feebly, "are you there—are you safe?"

"Yes—to both questions!" he answered, in a choked voice.

She seemed satisfied, and once more closed her eyes, while Diana rose from her knees, and beckoned the Baronet aside.

"You must go for a doctor. I am a nurse, but my work is now done, and it requires a surgeon to extract the bullet."

"One moment!" exclaimed Sir Kenneth, whose haggard face testified to his mental anxiety. "Can you tell me if the wound is serious?"

"No, I don't know," she answered, evasively, "because I do not know whether the bullet has penetrated any vital part. It is quite possible that there may be internal hemorrhage, and, if so, little can be done. However, a surgeon alone can tell if that is the case."

She gave him the necessary directions, and he went downstairs, and let himself out of the front door, which was open, and there, to his immense surprise, he was met by Mr. Causton, who looked flurried and anxious. In order to account for this, it must be explained that the lawyer had not been able to enter the house, in consequence of Vansittart having taken the precaution, after his own entrance, of closing the shutters of the conservatory door. Thus Mr. Causton was forced to remain outside, and he had been a witness of the hasty exit of Pierce Vansittart and his companion, Gaston. More than this, he had heard the conversation that took place between them, and it had upset his equanimity very considerably.

"One moment, if you please, sir," Gaston had said, as he found himself in the open air. "As things have turned out I must refuse to accompany you to America—or anywhere else, for that matter."

"What!" Vansittart returned with a smile that was bitterer than a sneer. "So you are one of those rats that desert a sinking ship!"

"I have myself to think of, you must remember, Mr. Vansittart, and though I'm not over careful as a rule, I draw the line at murder."

"Hush!" interrupted the other. "Don't let that word pass your lips. Surely you will help me to pull as far as Gravesend?"

"No, sir, I cannot."

"Not if I give you twenty—fifty—a hundred pounds for your services?"

The man hesitated. His cupidity was awakened; nevertheless prudence finally triumphed, and he shook his head.

"Not even for that, sir. I've kept out of the clutches of the law so far, and I'll continue to do so if I can. If no one but you and me knew of what that woman said it would be all right; but you see there's Sir Kenneth Hawtrey, and he's a ticklish customer. Besides, there'll be the deuce to pay over taking away his wife from the White House, and—well, altogether, I think I'd better make myself scarce. I'll wish you good-night, sir, and you have my best wishes for your escape. Whatever you may have been to other people, you've paid me well, and I have

no desire to see a rope round your neck." And, thus saying, Gaston turned quickly, and tramped away in the darkness.

Vansittart remained for a moment in deep thought; then, with a curse, turned on his heel, and walked down the garden. Causton, meanwhile, was a prey to conflicting feelings. From what he had heard he gathered that Vansittart was the author of some terrible crime, which he naturally connected with the pistol-shot he had heard, and it was clearly his duty not to let him escape. But, after all, what could he do? Vansittart was a much stronger and bigger man, and in all probability was armed. The lawyer anathematized his own foolishness for having, when he changed his clothes that evening, forgotten to take his revolver out of his coat-pocket. With that in his hand he would have taken upon himself the arrest.

As it was he followed Vansittart down the garden, saw him go down the steps, and get into a boat, and then pull away with rapid strokes down stream. Causton knew that his destination was Gravesend, and he reflected that there might still be time to capture him if he went to the nearest police station, and gave his description to the superintendent.

This he resolved to do, and it was on his return from the river that he met Sir Kenneth leaving the house.

The Baronet did not stay to ask him what brought him there—time was too precious to waste in such questions—but a sudden idea struck him. In leaving the two women alone there was a certain amount of risk, and the presence of Causton would be a sort of safeguard.

"Go upstairs at once, and into the room on the right of the passage," he said, hastily. "My wife is there, and another woman. Look after them till I come back with a doctor. I will explain all presently."

Too many strange events had happened on this eventful night to leave Mr. Causton any further capacity for surprise. He said nothing, but entered the house, and had no difficulty in finding the room indicated, for a thin line of light came through the interstices of the door, and guided him.

The sight that met his gaze when he went in was one to be remembered. Rosalind lay motionless on the couch, so pale and still that she might have been a marble statue, or—yet more ominous suggestion!—a corpse.

On the other side of the room, close to the fireplace, stood Diana Blackmore, with her back towards him. Unknown to Vansittart, she was aware of the existence of the safe in the wall, and it will be remembered that she now possessed the keys.

Having got rid of Sir Kenneth, she proceeded to execute the purpose that had been in her mind ever since Vansittart's departure—for she was resolved not to leave the lodge empty-handed, and there was a chance of finding either money or valuables in this secret hiding-place.

She opened the safe easily enough, and so absorbed was she in her search that she did not hear the entrance of the lawyer—whose movements, at all times, were essentially cat-like. Something in her attitude and occupation aroused his detective instincts, and he crept noiselessly behind her, and looked over her shoulder.

Suddenly his expression changed, and in the intensity of his excitement he gave vent to an exclamation that had the effect of making Diana turn round—for once startled out of her ordinary calm. She had not counted on interruption, for she knew quite a quarter of an hour must elapse before Sir Kenneth could return, and her sagacity told her that there was no danger of Vansittart venturing back.

Causton took no notice of her. His eyes were riveted on a peculiarly-shaped iron box, deposited in the very middle of the safe, and engraved on the cover with two initials, "W. N."

The box had been described to him twice—once by Nona and once by Claud, and his recognition of it was instantaneous. Here was the all-important clue—the clue which he had hardly dared to hope to find!

Once more his gaze fell on Rosalind, and then came back to the housekeeper. He laid his hand heavily on her arm.

"Do you see that box?" he said, pointing to it. "If you tell me truly who placed it here, I promise to give you a reward of fifty pounds."

"I would have told you without the reward," she answered, quietly; "but before I do so, be good enough to explain to me who you are."

"I am a friend of Sir Kenneth Hawtrey's. It was he who directed me to come here, and look after his wife until he comes back with the doctor."

"And pray what interest have you in that box?"

"One that concerns other people more vitally than myself. There has been a murder committed, and the man—for, of course, no woman could have done it—who brought that box here is, in all probability, the guilty person."

Diana started back, her face growing a little pale, while her hands twitched nervously.

"Who—what murder?" she gasped, hoarsely.

"One of which you must have heard. A gentleman named Fulke Marchant was killed at Crowthorne—ah!" as she gave a little cry, "you evidently know a good deal about it."

A few moments, and she had partially gained her composure.

"I know no more about it than the newspapers have told me, but I have seen Captain Marchant once or twice, and if what you say be true, I have seen his murderer as well. That box could have been placed here by no one save Pierce Vansittart."

Pierce Vansittart—Nona's husband!

A sudden flood of light broke on the lawyer. Strange that the name of Pierce Vansittart had never once suggested itself to him!

"And Lady Hawtrey! Does she know anything about it?"

"Lady Hawtrey!" repeated Diana, in surprise. "No, I should imagine not. What might you suppose such a thing?"

But Causton was saved from the awkward necessity of giving his reasons by the entrance of Sir Kenneth, who came in breathless with the haste he had made. The doctor would follow as soon as he had completed a hasty toilet—for he had been awakened from his slumbers by Sir Kenneth's summons, and was inclined to resent it.

As if some magnetic current flowed from him to her, Rosalind's lids slowly raised themselves at the Baronet's approach—and oh! what a light of devoted love shone in those dark eyes!

"Kenneth—my husband!" she whispered, holding out her hand, "am I forgiven at last? If I die will you think of me, not as one who sinned, but as one who repented?"

He said nothing, but knelt at her side, and bent his face over her hand. At last he was convinced of her love, and more than that, of his own, but words to tell her this would not come.

"Speak to me," she went on, feebly. "Tell me at least that you believe in my repentance. I shall die happy in that knowledge."

"Do not talk of dying, Rosalind! Ah, my love, my darling, the scales have fallen from my eyes, and I see now that love is strong as death—stronger, for I will not let you die. You shall live for me and happiness!"

Into her face there leapt the glad radiance of a perfect content. Her breath came quicker—in short, detached gasps—and she gave a quick cry of rapture.

"I am pardoned, and you love me! The joy of a lifetime is in those words. Pat your

arms round me, Kenneth—kiss me, for the first time since our marriage!"

He obeyed—heedless of those two onlookers whose presence he had indeed forgotten; and he held her close to his breast, while he rained down kisses on lips and brow, murmuring the while the sweet words of love that thrilled her with a very ecstasy of delight. And in the joy of that supreme moment, even the shadow of that dark presence which hovered near was well-nigh forgotten!

#### CHAPTER XLII., AND LAST.

But Rosalind did not die, after all. The surgeon, when he came, declared her to be faint and weak from loss of blood, but of the internal hemorrhage, at which Diana had hinted, there was no fear. The bullet had lodged in the fleshy part of the shoulder, and was extracted without much difficulty; and Sir Kenneth had a very shrewd suspicion that the housekeeper had been perfectly aware there was no danger, and had only hurried him off for the doctor because she wished to have an opportunity of inspecting the contents of the safe.

Of the iron box Mr. Causton at once took possession, and with it he marched up to the nearest police-station, where he told his story, and applied for—and obtained—a warrant against Vansittart. Two or three policemen were immediately told off to watch the Lodge, and it was intimated to the housekeeper that she would not be permitted to leave until her deposition was taken, and she was bound over to give evidence when called upon to do so.

To this she, perforce, assented, and offered to undertake the task of nursing Lady Hawtrey back to health, for though Rosalind's wound was not in itself dangerous, she was nevertheless so terribly prostrated, and her nerves were so thoroughly out of order from the recent strain upon them, that the medical man declared she must not be moved until she was quite convalescent.

The Baronet, while thanking Diana for her offer, did not think fit to avail himself of it, for his wife was much too precious to be trusted to the care of a woman in whom he could not place implicit confidence. He, therefore, sent for a trained nurse, but the chief part of the nursing he did himself, for he could hardly tear himself from Rosalind's side even for a moment, and he seemed to be trying to make her forget that there had ever been a time in her life when he cared for her less than at present.

"This is our honeymoon!" he whispered, as he sat by the side of the couch, his one hand holding hers, while the other rested on the thick coils of her shining hair; "and we have long arrears of happiness to make up for, you must remember!"

She smiled back an answer of mute content. She sometimes told herself she felt like some shipwrecked mariner who suddenly finds himself in a haven. Her life had been so tempest-tossed that she more than once caught herself wondering whether this calm could indeed be lasting, or whether it was only some happy dream that would dissolve with the light of the morning.

If Mr. Causton had embarked on a mistaken enterprise when his suspicions fastened themselves on Lady Hawtrey, he had at least the satisfaction of knowing that, after all, these suspicions had had the result of putting him on the right track, for otherwise he would never have followed Sir Kenneth to Chiswick, and, in all probability, the existence of the safe would not have been discovered. Diana Blackmore would have taken any portable valuables from it, and would then have released it, and its discovery would have been a remote possibility.

With the housekeeper's aid he was able to give a very minute description of Vansittart, and Diana also suggested that his yacht, which she knew to be lying off Gravesend, should be boarded and watched. This was done, with the result that a little after day-

break Mr. Pierce Vansittart found himself confronted by two quiet-looking men in plain clothes, who asked him to accompany them, and consider himself under arrest on the grave charge of murder.

He did not flinch as they fastened the handcuffs on his wrists, neither did he utter a word in answer to the charge, further than—

"I think you have made a mistake." It is true, they cautioned him that any admissions he made would be used against him, and perhaps prudence counselled silence.

He was brought up before the magistrates the next day, and charged, firstly, with poisoning his wife's nephew, Willie Noel, and, secondly, with firing the shot that killed Captain Fulke Marchant. The former case was dealt with first, and Diana Blackmore was the first witness called.

Her evidence was given with characteristic brevity. She deposed that she had known Pierce Vansittart for many years, and that she had acted as housekeeper to him. Before that she had been a nurse, and when Mrs. Vansittart's nephew was ill she was sent for to attend to him—Mrs. Vansittart herself being under the impression that she was a trained nurse from one of the London hospitals.

She added that one night when she—Diana—was very tired, Mrs. Vansittart undertook to sit up with the little boy, and to give him his medicine—which was put in a particular place on the mantelpiece, so that the lady, who was blind, might have no difficulty in finding it. There was a bottle of carbolic acid in the room, but that was inside a locked cupboard, and there were no other bottles of any kind in the sick chamber.

Diana went on to say that she threw herself on a couch in the adjoining apartment, but not being able to sleep, got up presently, and returned to the little boy's room in search of a book she had left there. The child was asleep, and Mrs. Vansittart had quitted his side for a moment. It afterwards transpired that she had gone for some knitting, with which to occupy herself during her vigil. The so-distant nurse said that when she entered the room, she saw Mr. Vansittart in the act of pouring something out of one bottle into another, and that he seemed in a great rage at her entrance, and peremptorily ordered her away.

She obeyed, and returned to her room, and a quarter of an hour after she heard the little boy shriek, and, on hurrying in, found that Mrs. Vansittart had given him carbolic acid instead of his proper medicine—but the carbolic acid was not in its original bottle, but in one exactly resembling that containing the medicine. Moreover, the cupboard in which the acid had been kept had been locked, and she herself had the key, but she was aware that Mr. Vansittart also possessed a key that would unlock it.

After the little boy's death she accused her employer of having purposely poured the poison into another bottle, and substituted that for the medicine, trusting to his wife's blindness, and the fact that she had at the time a bad cold, which blunted her sense of smell, for not discovering the deception. He did not deny it, but told witness he would pay her well to hold her tongue; and she, thinking that nothing she could say would bring the dead child back to life, promised to keep silence.

Accordingly, at the inquest, she had said nothing of the cupboard in which the carbolic acid was kept being locked, and nothing of having seen Mr. Vansittart pouring out some liquid in the bedroom; and an open verdict was therefore returned.

At this point, the presiding magistrate asked her if she was not aware that, though an open verdict was returned, suspicion, nevertheless, attached very strongly to Mrs. Vansittart, and she admitted that she knew this; but her brow darkened as she said it, and Causton, who was watching her, decided that she bore no good will to the blind lady.

His idea, indeed, was that she was jealous of Nona, but this he kept to himself.

Diana concluded her evidence by saying that Vansittart agreed to allow her a hundred and fifty pounds a year so long as she kept silence, and she would have continued to do so if he had not broken faith with her.

"Then," said the magistrate, "it is to revenge yourself on Mr. Vansittart that you have made this tardy confession?"

"Yes," she returned, defiantly. "But I don't see that my motive has anything to do with the value of my evidence."

This was true, for her testimony was in itself sufficient to justify the magistrate in committing the accused for trial, and he did not go into the other charge, as Causton was not quite prepared with his evidence.

Vansittart only once looked up as he was led away, and that was to send one glance at his late housekeeper—a glance so full of venom, that Diana, hardened as she was, put up her hands with a little gasp of fear.

That was the last time she ever saw him alive, for that same night, a warder going into his cell, found Vansittart stretched on the floor quite dead, and with a long gold pin that he had concealed about his person driven straight to his heart. Death must have been instantaneous, and when the surgeon examined the body of the unhappy man, he was astonished at the force and accuracy with which the blow had been driven home.

So ended a life that began under the brightest auspices, and might have been a blessing to its owner, as well as to his fellow-creatures; but through a selfish indulgence in evil passions, an uncurbed temper, and a reckless pursuit of pleasure, had poured itself a bane to everyone brought within its influence.

He left no confession—no word of farewell—no prayer for forgiveness. He died as he had lived, without a thought for anyone but himself, and it is little wonder that no one followed him to his unhallowed grave.

And yet—so strange is the human heart—that night after he was buried, a woman, dressed in black and deeply veiled, stood for half an hour in silent contemplation of the freshly-turned soil, and when she left she placed upon it a bunch of roses—not white—that would have been mockery—but rich-hued crimson blossoms, whose scent hung heavy on the air.

Perhaps she had loved him, "not wisely, but too well."

Our story draws to an end. There is little more to tell, for now that Causton had proved to his own satisfaction that Vansittart was the murderer of Fulke Marchant, he was not long in getting together such evidence as justified him in demanding Claud Trevelyan's release.

Gaston came forward and told how he had been employed with another man by Vansittart, to take Nona from the White House; and how, through not knowing the lady, he had mistaken Rosalind for her, and, after drugging her, carried her off to Chiswick.

That was on the night of the murder, and Vansittart had been absent in the country, and had not returned until the next day.

His destination was proved by the return half of a ticket bearing date the day of the murder, which he had not used, and which was found in his waistcoat pocket—for as we know, he came back by a different route, so as to try and avoid suspicion. Then, again, his revolver was examined, and the bullet extracted from Marchant's body was found to correspond exactly with those in it; added to which Rosalind was enabled to testify that she had seen Vansittart put the iron box in the safe—and this evidence was held to be conclusive.

Accordingly, Claud was liberated, and drove away from the W— goal in Squire Charlton's landau, where he was seated side by



side with the Squire himself, and opposite to Edith and Nona Vansittart.

When they got to Crowthorne they found the village quite en fête, for the news of Claud's release had spread like wildfire, and the people all turned out of their cottages to catch a glimpse of him, and cheer him as he passed.

He bowed right and left in acknowledgment of their greetings, and looked so radiant and handsome, so full of delight at his newfound liberty, that one of the women said to another—

"No need to tell me he's innocent! No man with a face like that—as gay and blithe and open as a spring morning—could commit the crime of murder," and this correctly represented the idea of her neighbours.

Edith was very silent during that drive. Her heart was too full for words, but she feasted her eyes with the delight of watching that dear face, all the dearer because of the tribulation through which its owner had passed.

In Claud's pocket—the left-hand breast pocket, of course—reposed a letter she had written him—such a sweet, loving, frank, and yet maidenly letter!—expressing her remorse for ever having doubted him, and assuring him of her love and constancy.

This letter had been written immediately after Nona's explanation, and, when the young man read it, it seemed as if summer sunshine had suddenly burst through the sullen clouds of a wintry day!

It was arranged that the two young people should be married with as little delay as possible; in fact, the only thing Edith stipulated for, was that the ceremony should not take place until her dear Rosalind was well enough to assist at it.

Lady Hawtrey, when she had the letter telling her this, wrote back that the wedding might be fixed for a month hence, for she was getting strong as rapidly as she could.

"There is no medicine like happiness," she added. "And, moreover, it has all the effect of novelty for me. Oh, Edith! my husband is so good to me, so thoughtful, so chivalrous, so noble! I never can express his kindness, or my gratitude. My whole life will be devoted to proving it!"

One reason why Claud wished the wedding to be very soon was on account of Nona's eyesight. While she was at the White House a famous London oculist had said there was a possibility of her recovering her sight if she remained in a darkened room, and took proper measures; but since Claud's apprehension she had quite forgotten herself, and her anxiety on his behalf had made her neglect all precautions on her own.

It was certain, too, that the success of her treatment depended much on her having some kind female companion at hand to supply the place Rosalind formerly occupied, and who so fitted or eager to undertake the task as warm-hearted little Edith?

And so on a sunny day in the early spring-time, when the sky was blue, and the trees were covered with the soft green shadows of the young leaves, Claud led his girl-bride to the altar, and in the little village church of Crowthorne, where she had been christened and confirmed, she took the vows that made her a wife.

Needless to say the church was full of people, and odorous with the scent of many thousands of flowers, and the sweetest flower of all was Edith herself—pale, and a little tremulous, but very happy withal.

An ideal bride, too, in her sweeping robes of ivory satin, with a diadem of orange blossoms, and a necklace of pearls that an empress might have envied!

This was the gift of Sir Kenneth and Lady Hawtrey—both of whom were at the wedding. Rosalind looking very beautiful in a wonderful dress of some gorgeous gold brocade, that suited her imperial style of beauty to perfection.

But of all that wedding cortège no one was looked upon with more interest than the blind lady, very simply and quietly dressed, who came up the aisle leaning on Squire Charlton's arm.

Nona's gift to the newly-wedded pair was a magnificent one, being nothing more nor less than a fine house in Park Lane, which she bought and presented to them as a town residence.

But all this took place two years ago, and now Nona has regained the sight of one eye—the other is injured too much to ever recover—and has embarked on her long-cherished plan for building a hospital for children, as a memorial of her little dead nephew, Willie Noel.

May her undertaking have all the success it deserves!

There is a sturdy little heir at King's Royal now, and Rosalind is the happiest of young mothers—if we except Edith, whose fair little baby girl is quite as pretty as herself.

And now a word for Mr. Causton, whose business carried him very frequently to Devonshire after the "Crowthorne murder case" was over, and who paid many visits to Weir Cottage, the result of which eventually converted pretty Janet into Mrs. Causton!

The lawyer's cynicism seemed to die a natural death on his wedding-day, and he has never had cause to regret the chance that sent him in search of Sir Kenneth on that windy winter night, when, for the first time in his life, he was struck with Cupid's golden shaft!

[THE END.]

## Short Girls.

I imagine that no woman would be likely to wish to add a cubit to her stature, either by taking thought or by any other more usual and familiar method. But that there are plenty of women who are desirous of adding two or three inches to their stature is abundantly proved by the ready sale which was commanded by the so-called "elevators" when they were first introduced. Short, however, of having recourse to these barbarous and inadequate methods of bringing a woman nearer heaven, is there no means by which a girl who was intended by nature to be short can make herself tall—or, at least, taller? The answer may be given unhesitatingly in the affirmative, and the means to be adopted are principally four.

First, there is the obvious expedient of wearing very high-heeled shoes, but that is only the starting-point, and is of very little use unless it is supplemented by the other three devices.

Secondly, skirts should, of course, be worn long, as nothing takes off so much from the apparent height as the short skirt.

The third thing, which can, unfortunately, only be recommended to girls with particularly good figures, is to have their skirts made very tight across the hips, and no one who has not seen this tried would believe how much apparent height it adds to a short figure.

The fourth point is, of course, to wear hats as high as the rigorous code of fashion will permit, and the same thing equally applies to the dressing of the hair.

It is, of course, unnecessary to add that all horizontal lines tend towards dumpiness, while perpendicular lines make for willowy slenderness.

If these rules are carefully observed, a girl with a microscopic supply of inches may deceive not merely the unobservant bystander, but the trained eye of a stage-manager, into thinking that she is of fair, medium height.

Heaven's reward is not to him who counts the cost of service, but to him who serves, whatever the cost.

We cannot honestly and safely receive the praise of men unless we deserve their love.

A proud man never shows his pride so much as when he is civil.

## SLEEP AS A RESTORATIVE.

Without sound sleep neither health nor beauty can long be retained. Much of the discomfort and nervousness that people complain of when they rise in the morning is due to the fact that each does not sleep alone. There is nothing that will so derange the nervous system of a person who is eliminative in nervous force as to lie all night in bed with another who is absorbent of nervous force. The latter will sleep soundly all night, and arise refreshed in the morning, while the former will toss restlessly, and awake in the morning fretful, peevish, fainthearted, and discouraged. No two persons, says a medical authority, no matter who they are, should habitually sleep together. The one will thrive, the other will lose. This is the law. The grandmother with her little grandchild is a case in point. The aged one keeps strong; the little one pines away and becomes enfeebled. A lady in middle life informed us the other day that she habitually rose in the morning nervous, worried, and weak, while her husband would sleep soundly all night. The touch of his foot even would awaken nervousness and discomfort, while he seemed to be wholly unaffected.

It is wonderful how much may be done to protract existence by the habitual restorative of sound sleep. Late hours under mental strain are, of course, incompatible with this good work of sleep. A physician reports that he has traced the beginning of pulmonary consumption in many cases to late hours and evening parties, by which the rest is broken and encroachments made on the constitution. If in middle age the habit of taking deficient and irregular sleep be still maintained, every source of depression, every latent form of disease is quickened and intensified. The sleepless exhaustion allies itself with every other exhaustion, or it kills imperceptibly by a rapid introduction of premature old age, which leads prematurely to dissolution.

A scientific writer says that sleep, if taken at the right moment, will prevent an attack of nervous headache. If the subjects of such headaches will watch the symptoms of its coming, they can notice that it begins with a feeling of weariness or heaviness. This is the time a sleep of an hour, or even two, as nature guides, will effectually prevent the headache. If not then, it will be too late, for after the attack is fairly under way it is impossible to get sleep until far into the night, perhaps. It is so common in these days for doctors to forbid having their patients waked to take medicines if they are asleep when the hour comes round, that people have learned the lesson pretty well, and they generally know that sleep is better for the sick than medicine. But it is not so well-known that sleep is a wonderful prevention of disease, better than tonic regulators and stimulants.

A DELICIOUS flavour may be given to coffee by rubbing the lump of sugar which sweetens it over orange or lemon rind. People who like the slice of lemon in their tea will appreciate a slice of lime instead, which will give a deliciously piquant flavour.

THE KING AND LORD MAYOR'S DAY.—The question as to whether the King will attend the Lord Mayor's banquet at the Guildhall is not likely this year. A City paper, speaking with bated breath on so "delicate a subject," says: "The citizens earnestly hope that the precedent set by Her late Majesty in attending the Guildhall banquet soon after her accession in 1837 will be followed by King Edward VII." But, according to other authorities, the precedent was not set by Queen Victoria, but by her remote ancestors. The Guildhall librarian says that Queen Victoria attended the mayoralty banquet in accordance with a custom which had prevailed for many centuries, and the industrious Timbs informs us with three exceptions every Sovereign has dined at the Guildhall on the Lord Mayor's Day after his or her accession or coronation since 1650.

## Helpful Talks

BY THE EDITOR.

*The Editor is pleased to hear from his readers at any time.*

*All letters must give the name and address of the writers, not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.*

**T.L.**—Laving the eyes with tepid water sometimes helps to remove the black lines under them.

**WALTER W.**—Smoking is very injurious to a boy of seventeen. He should avoid stimulants of every kind.

**MARY W.**—In the study of etiquette much must be learned by observation, but much more is learned by practice.

**F. H. J. (Deal).**—There is nothing for you to do, under the circumstances, but to keep quiet, and feel profoundly thankful that you have escaped marriage with such a man.

**MAIDIE.**—Calliope, in Greek mythology, is the muse of epic poetry, named from the sweetness of her voice. She is represented as bearing a tablet and stilts, waiting to record heroic deeds.

**MARGUERITE.**—To render the colour of cotton fabric permanent, dissolve three gills of salt in four quarts of hot water. Put in the calico and let it remain until the water is cold. The colours will not fade by subsequent washing.

**NORAH.**—The readiest way to find whether soap will injure the delicate skin of women or children is to test it with the tongue. Good soap, in which the caustic alkali is neutralised by thorough combination with the fat, will not have a sharp taste.

**ENQUIRER.**—To transfer engravings to paper, place the engraving for a few seconds over the vapour of iodine. Dip a slip of white paper in a weak solution of starch, and, when dry, lay the slip upon the engraving, and place both for a few minutes under a press.

**MARY.**—Christ cross row, or criss cross row, is a familiar designation formerly applied to the first line, or row, of the alphabet, as arranged in the old horn-books or primers. The first line commenced with a Greek cross, and it was from that fact that the term originated.

**WORRIED MOTHER.**—I would willingly advise you concerning the discovery of the whereabouts of your boy, but, unfortunately, I have no means of tracing him. Perhaps the authorities of the town from which he last wrote can furnish you with some information concerning his subsequent movements. If this suggestion meets with your approval, address the note of inquiry to the chief of police of the place in question and to the postmaster.

**FLOSSIE.**—The difficulty of making a canvas bag air-tight would be in hermetically closing the seam or seams. Were it not for this fact, such a bag could be coated with liquid rubber. A rubber bag will prove much more satisfactory, and can be made of sufficient thickness to withstand an inside pressure of twenty or twenty-five pounds to the square inch. There are several rubber dealers in your city from whom such an article may be purchased. It would be advisable to have it made to order.

**STAGE STRUCK.**—After giving the matter the most particular thought and attention, I am compelled to state that to me the reason for your friend sending you a couple of matches wrapped in paper is unfathomable. Perhaps the sender, knowing that you were considered matchless in every way, determined in a jealous moment to render such an opinion valueless; or, again, in some idle moment, without malice aforethought, you have related some story which, seeming obscure to your friend, he or she has sent this little hint that more light on the subject is needed.

**CARNATION.**—The only proper way of getting an introduction to a lady is to enlist the services of a mutual friend to thus honour you.

**LILLA.**—Bathe your face night and morning in a solution of borax and water until the pimples are removed. Also be particular about your diet, avoiding all rich, salt, or greasy food.

**BESSIE.**—You are a very good height, and have probably attained your full growth. You are a blonde from your description. The hair enclosed is pale-gold. Your writing indicates an amiable, well-balanced nature, but somewhat impulsive.

**ATREY.**—Judged by your superior penmanship, it is difficult to believe that you are engaged daily in hard manual labour. As nothing under the sun is absolutely perfect, it stands to reason that practice will improve handwriting, no matter how neat or pretty it may be.

**BLUSHING BESSIE.**—How do you know that you are reduced to such an alternative? Perhaps some man that you can love will yet seek your hand. A woman should not marry a man that she does not love simply to secure a home. It is an old adage that "nobody pays so dearly for a home as a woman that marries for one."

**TREVORIA.**—1. I see no reason why the oatmeal obtained from your grocer should not be as good as that purchased elsewhere. Used in a dry form, it would seem to have irritated your skin. Try some tied in a piece of muslin or fine linen, and wash the face with it as you would use a face flannel. The oatmeal need not be thrown away each time you use it; a handful will last a week or more. 2. I do not quite understand your second question. If you mean an appointment to a church, you will see such announced in the Church papers from time to time.

**WARWICK.**—One of the best authorities says that the hair grows at the rate of about one-half inch per month, but this is probably only the average rate, and may not be correct for all cases.

**SIS.**—You are right, and your friend is wrong. The sun is really much nearer the earth in winter than in summer, but the rays falling upon the earth obliquely in winter convey less warmth.

**SUSAN.**—It is not etiquette to pass forward to another the dish that has been handed to you, unless requested to do so; it may have been purposely designed for you, and passing it to another may give him or her what is not wanted.

**AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.**—First cousins are persons who, not being related as brothers or sisters, yet had the same grand-parent. Second cousins had the same great-grand-parent, and third cousins the same great-great-grand-parent.

**LINA.**—In making cocoanut cakes, use the following ingredients:—One cocoanut, carefully skinned and grated; the milk of the same; one pound and a half of powdered sugar; as much water as you have cocoanut milk, and the whites of three eggs. Dissolve one pound of sugar in the milk and water; stew until it becomes a rosy syrup, and turn out into a buttered dish. Have ready the beaten white of an egg, with the remaining half-pound of sugar whipped into it; mix with this the grated cocoanut, and little by little, beating all the time, the boiled syrup, as soon as it cools sufficiently not to scald the eggs. Drop in tablespoonfuls upon buttered papers. Try one first, and if it runs, beat in more sugar. Bake in a very moderate oven, watching to prevent scorching. They should not be allowed to brown at all; and although they will keep for some time, are best when quite fresh.

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**RAINA.**—There is nothing I am acquainted with that will make the hands smaller. Be content with what nature has provided for you. It does not at all follow that a large hand is unhandsome.

**LORRIE LATIMER.**—It is a case, I suppose, of mere infatuation, which she has not the strength of mind to resist. It is very deplorable. Surely her friends should step in and reason with her on the matter.

**MORDED.**—Rub each egg carefully all over, while still perfectly fresh, with good lard or butter, and keep in a cool place, not packed in hay. A new-laid egg treated in this way will preserve its good qualities for weeks.

**VIOLET.**—The first elevated railway—the New York Elevated Railway Company—was begun in 1866, and commenced operations in 1872, running from the Battery along Greenwich Street and Ninth Avenue to Thirtieth Street. The original plan of operating it by stationary engines and endless wire ropes was abandoned for dummy engines.

**LISTEN TO ME.**—The origin of the sandwich is generally ascribed to the Earl of Sandwich, who was so addicted to play that he would pass whole days at the gambling-table without taking any refreshment save a piece of meat between two slices of bread; but it is said that this substitute for a regular meal was not first used by the Earl in the reign of George III., as the Romans had eaten them long before. They called them *offula*.

**RUBY.**—The masque was a species of dramatic entertainment, and was much cultivated in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It included scenic effects and dancing. Originating in the pageants of the middle ages, the actors in which wore masks, it gradually became a recognised form of the spoken drama. In the reign of James I., leading dramatic actors, with the exception of Shakespeare, wrote masques for the Court.

**ERNIE.**—When a private shows especial aptitude for the various duties assigned him he stands an excellent chance for appointment as corporal, sergeant, or other non-commissioned officer, when any vacancies occur.

**LEONARD.**—A young man who enlists with the idea of advancing himself should always endeavour to gain the goodwill of his superiors, but more especially that of his company commander, by strict observance of all the rules governing a soldier, sobriety, and an evident desire to please in every particular. This should not be done in a truckling, subservient manner, but be evidenced by a manly, straightforward performance of duty.

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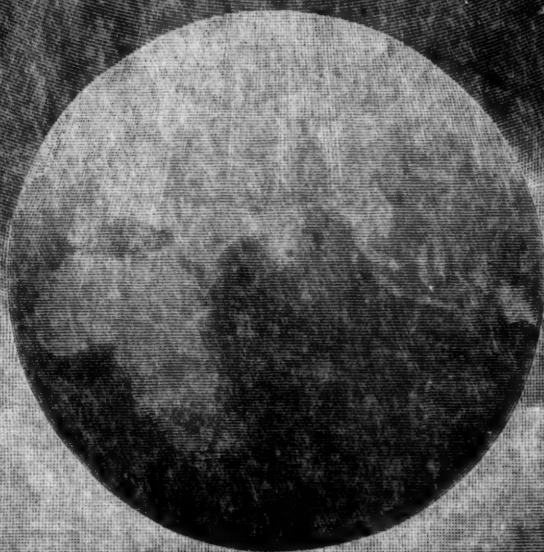
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